MODERN FRENCH DECORATION

KATHARINE MORRISON KAHLE

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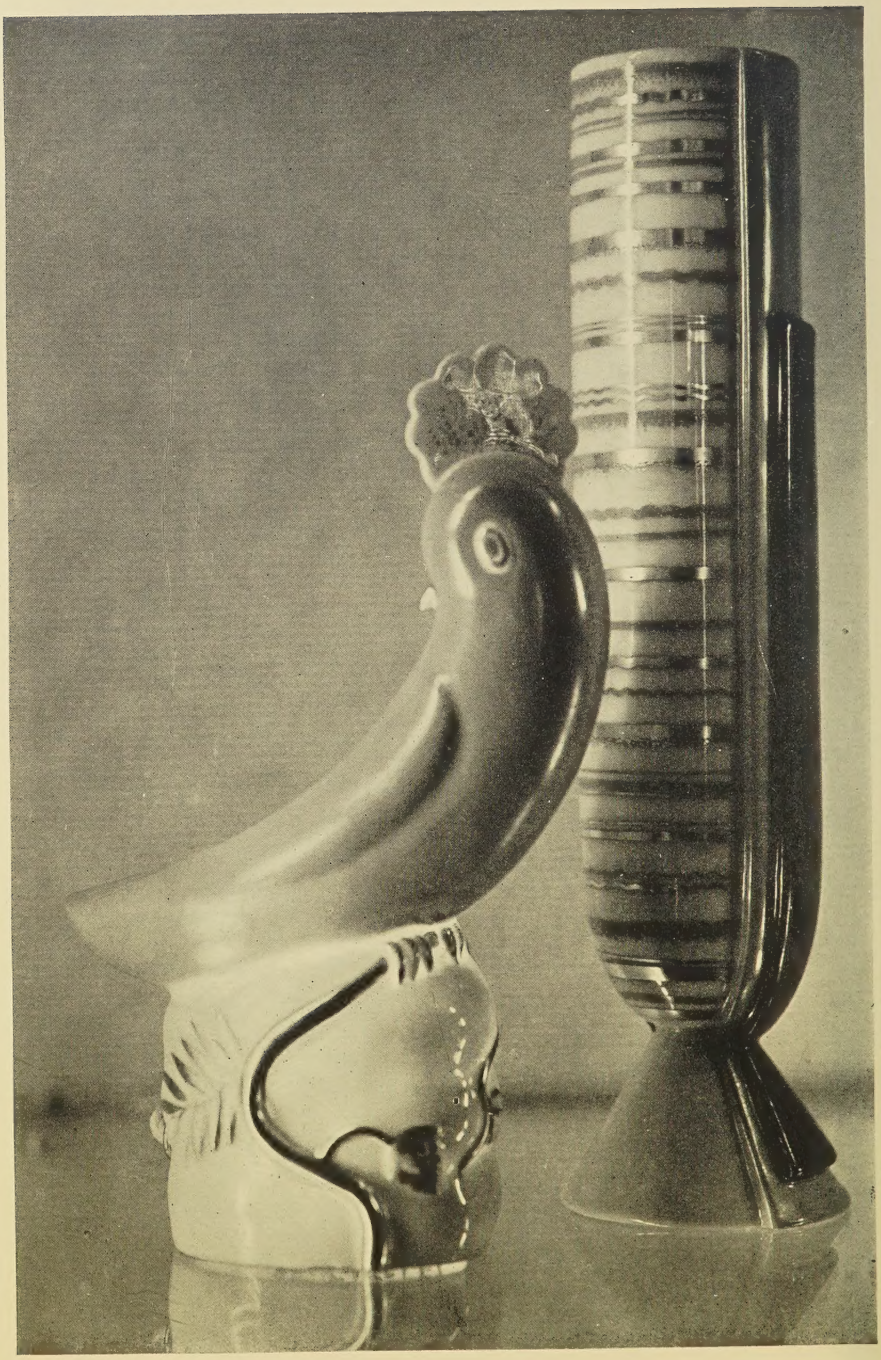

PORCELAIN LAMP.

Hélène Gatelet.

MODERN FRENCH DECORATION

BY

KATHARINE MORRISON KAHLE, M.A.

Extension Lecturer in Interior Decoration, University of California;
Author of "An Outline of Period Furniture"

WITH TWENTY-SEVEN ILLUSTRATIONS

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MODERN FRENCH DECORATION

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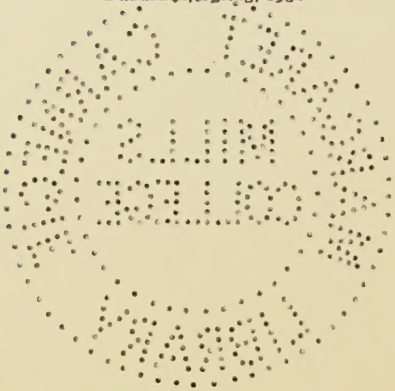

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To My Friend

DR. PHYLLIS ACKERMAN

CONNOISSEUR OF ARTS

IN APPRECIATION

PREFACE

I have endeavored to give a complete understanding, an all-round knowledge, and specific detail, that will enable decorators or laymen to create interiors in the manner of the Modern French. These notes are not an argument for the Modern French Decorative Arts, but an exposition of their characteristics and elements. I speak with a knowledge of the modern decoration of Austria, Germany, England and other countries, but also with the conviction that France is the leader in 20th Century decoration as she has been many times in the decorative periods of the past.

I have to thank a host of people who in various ways have assisted me in collecting my materials.

Especially, I wish to thank Leon Deshairs for placing at my disposal the French references on my subject and also for writing the excellent introduction.

I wish also to thank Reginald Poland of the San Diego

Fine Arts Gallery and Mary Benton of the Art Department of the San Diego State College.

For my illustrations I wish to express my gratitude to the French Decorators who so graciously supplied photographs of their interiors.

San Diego, California,
December, 1929.

INTRODUCTION

Classical—Modern:—Two words which one is accustomed to oppose and which, however, do not fundamentally designate two contradictory tendencies. Nothing is classical today which, at its beginning, was not modern—that is to say: original, living.

All the French styles were modern in their florescence, even though they were nourished by ancient art. They were so, at least up to the first third of the 19th century, the epoch when artists and manufacturers, thinking that everything had been said, came to the point of persuading themselves that the only chance of salvation for them was in the copying or the imitation of models sanctified by time.

Happily, the sap was not exhausted. The spirit of research and invention reappeared between 1889 and 1900.

What a glorious story is the remanifestation of this return to life. It has already been attempted by more than one

writer. In order to tell this story once again, Katharine Morrison Kahle has not limited herself to reading the books of others. She has gone to get first hand information, visiting the state collections, the stores, the studios, looking at the works close by, and questioning the men. She has brought to this inquiry not only the sympathetic curiosity and the method of the historian, but also the exquisite taste of a woman sensitive to all the niceties of house decoration.

Without doubt—her age makes it so—it is in the works of these last years that her preferences run.

But, she could not fail to recognize the talent and the courage of the initiators. And indeed how could one not admire the works of a Gallé, a Grasset, a Plumet and a Gaillard and of many others who, first at their own risk and peril confronted the coalition of interests and habits.

If they did, as do all those who seek, commit errors, they have at least one great merit. They cleared the ground in which their juniors have harvested.

Today their cause is won. The rational rejuvenation of forms commenced by the minor arts, textiles, odd pieces of furniture, has progressively extended itself to the entire house. Industry, for a long time regressive, urges the competition of

creative artists; architecture, rendered flexible by the new methods of construction offers to furniture made for our time, a fitting background. Lighting from hidden sources creates intimate fairy scenes. The search for startling novelty was, 25 or 30 years ago, the principal shortcoming of the modern French decorative art. I would not declare that today it is entirely free from it, but in a general way it has rejected extremes. It has become calm and simple. It has acquired in addition to the practical qualities which make of it a good servant for our needs and our tastes, a discreet, well-bred elegance. It has reached a point of maturity where, while maintaining the imprint of its native heath—something which no one will reproach it for—it can be understood and welcomed everywhere. It tends in its turn to become classical. The book of Katharine Morrison Kahle comes, therefore, truly at an opportune time. May it contribute to making the modern French Decorative Art understood and loved.

LEON DESHAIRS,
Conservateur de la Bibliothèque
du Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris.

INTRODUCTION

Classique—Moderne: deux mots qu'on a coutume d'opposer et qui cependant, au fond, ne désignent pas deux tendances contradictoires. Rien n'est classique aujourd'hui qui, à sa naissance, n'ait été moderne, c'est à dire original, vivant.

Modernes, tous les styles français le furent, en leur floraison, même quand ils étaient nourris d'art antique. Ils le furent du-moins jusqu'au premier tiers du XIXe siècle, époque où artistes et industriels, pensant que tout avait été dit, en vinrent à se persuader qu'il n'y avait de salut pour eux que dans la copie ou l'imitation des modèles consacrés par le temps.

Heureusement la sève n'était pas tarie. L'esprit de recherche et d'invention reparut, entre 1889 et 1900.

La belle historie que celle de ce redressement, de ce retour à la vie! Elle a déjà tenté plus d'un écrivain. Pour la raconter à son tour, Katharine Morrison Kahle ne s'est pas bornée à lire les livres des autres. Elle est allée se renseigner

sur place, visitant les collections publiques, les magasins, les ateliers, regardant de près les œuvres et interrogeant les hommes. Elle a apporté à cette enquête non seulement la curiosité sympathique et la méthode de l'historien, mais aussi le goût affiné d'une femme sensible à toutes les délicatesses du décor de la maison.

Sans doute,—ainsi le veut son âge—c'est aux œuvres de ces dernières années que vont ses prédilections. Mais elle ne pouvait méconnaître le talent et la courage des initiateurs. Comment en effet ne pas admirer les Gallé et les Grasset, les Plumet et les Gaillard, et tant d'autres qui, les premiers, à leurs risques et périls, affrontèrent la coalition des intérêts et des habitudes? S'il leur est arrivé, comme à tous ceux qui cherchent, de commettre des erreurs, ils ont eu du-moins un grand mérite: ils ont défriché le terrain où leurs cadets ont moissonné.

Aujourd'hui leur cause est gagnée—Le rajeunissement rationnel des formes, commencé par les bibelots, les tissus, les meubles isolés, s'est progressivement étendu à l'ensemble de la maison. L'industrie, longtemps rétrograde, sollicite le concours des artistes originaux. L'architecture, assouplie par les nouvelles méthodes de construction, offre aux meubles faits

pour notre temps le cadre qui leur convient. L'éclairage à sources cachées crée d'intimes féeries.

La recherche d'une nouveauté agressive était, il y a vingt-cinq ou trente ans, le défaut capital de l'art décoratif français moderne. Je n'affirmerais pas qu'aujourd'hui il en est toujours exempt. Mais, d'une façon générale, il a répudié les outrances. Il est devenu calme et simple. Il a acquis, en outre des qualités pratiques qui en font un bon serviteur de nos besoins et de nos goûts, une élégance discrète et de bonne compagnie. Il est arrivé à unpoint de maturité où, tout en conservant l'accent de son pays d'origine—ce que personne ne lui reprochera—il peut être compris et bien accueilli partout. Il tend à devenir classique à son tour.

Le livre de Katharine Morrison Kahle vient donc vraiment à son heure. Puisse-t-il contribuer à faire connaître l'art décoratif français moderne, à le faire aimer.

LEON DESHAIRS,
Conservateur de la Bibliothèque
du Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris.

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MODERN FRENCH DECORATION

CHAPTER I

HISTORY AND ORIGINS

CHAPTER I

HISTORY AND ORIGINS

Modern French Decoration has achieved a development that enables it to take a place with the decorations of other centuries. Whatever may be said for or against modern decoration, there is and has been, since its flowering in the 1925 Exposition des Arts Décoratifs, a definite style of decoration that has evolved during the last thirty years and will continue to exist in related form to the end of the century. When its peak will be reached and when its decline begin, is not to be stated at this early date.

The Modern movement is necessary for a complete expression of the Modern French Spirit. Furniture, and other objects of daily use, are not mechanical creations, but instead, their existence follows and shapes itself as that of human beings. It is this human influence that has been responsible for many of the changes in furniture, and in other articles of household usage. Fashions, politics, religious thought, social

customs and manners of living have all been determining factors in the forms of furniture. Hooped skirts necessitated broad and ample chair seats, the pastoral play of Marie Antoinette was reflected by the bowknot and Shepherd's staff in the decoration of that period, while the Empire brought heavy, virile furniture and Roman and Egyptian motifs, and changes in manners and customs of living altered the size of French rooms.

So interwoven has been the life of household forms with that of the people who use them, that in each age, created by artists, and fostered by royalty, furniture has come to be a definite expression of the life of the epoch. This close connection existed age after age from earliest times, with slight breaks, down through the age of Louis Philippe. The human element in decorative forms makes a periodical renewment necessary. There are various indirect and underlying causes of these changes which are based upon the spiritual trend of the age rather than upon superficial causes. Sometimes it is the desire of invention, at times it is urged by ambition or the initiative and valor of the artists, or again by the commands of a sovereign. A failure to observe and take into account the life of the times results in a superficial furniture, and usu-

ally in a direct copying of the forms and elements of another age. This condition existed after the period of Louis Philippe. The introduction of large industries with their transformation of methods of work from the individual to the mass production took the work out of the hands of artists and gave it to artisans who understood little of what they were doing. The demand for mass production, together with the lack of culture and appreciation on the part of the bourgeoisie who now demanded "copies of the kings", but little distinguished between the good and bad merits of these copies, made it impossible for an artist workman to maintain a livelihood unless he conformed to the poor standards of the age.

For even as furniture is an expression of the age in which it exists, so is it moulded by the demands of its public. Decorative forms can never be superior to the taste of the majority in control. Thus the changes in industry and society produced definite changes in the appearance and construction of furniture. Rich materials and fine surface finish were no longer found for the public taste did not appreciate the difference between hand and machine work, and, therefore, refused to pay the greater price which added time and better quality of materials made necessary. One found instead yards of ma-

chine made decorative carving tacked or glued to poorly constructed forms, this alone serving to label them Louis XV or Louis XVI. Individuality in furniture form or ornamentation was wanting, since all furniture was made in mass quantity from one model. For these reasons French decoration, as that of other countries, lapsed, followed this period of historic copying, and in spite of a continuous effort since 1850, has only within the last ten years again reached a form which can be rated with the fine periods of other ages, or be rightly called a serious expression of its age. Modern French Decoration, whatever may be its faults, has this distinction in accordance with other periods—it is a true and representative product of the age—the 20th century.

What are these elements of 20th century life that one should expect to find expressed in its decorative forms? First and foremost—*directness*, the bold approach to a task by the shortest, most efficient method. Then, is it not logical that the furniture should be simple and unadorned in an age where the straight line and open path have replaced the arabesque and romantic? In an age where the motor car and the paquebot hold an important place, and where their efficiency has been so developed that the form resulting has

achieved the beautiful—for there is always a certain beauty resulting from the methods of workmanship if they are true to materials used, and beauty is achieved through a perfection of form to function. For an illustration one may compare the steam engine and the paquebot of twenty years ago with the newest product of today, where a harmony of line and form suggest the efficacy to carry out the greatest speed. Is it not consistent that our homes and our furniture should, to some degree, follow these same methods of efficiency, usefulness and comfort? Sanitation has also reached its height and plays an important part in the life of the 20th century.

And yet, nothing new can be developed satisfactorily without a dependence upon the work, discoveries and experience of that which has gone before. In this respect, we find modern decoration with its roots deep in the old traditions. The créateurs, as those of other ages, have a complete knowledge of past forms and methods of workmanship, and are themselves masters of both design and craftsmanship. In the créateurs of French 20th century furniture, we find men who not only design, but can and do model and complete the object. Never in the history of woodwork has there been such an appreciation of the beauty of materials necessary for the

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construction of an object, or the simple beauty of the evidences of good workmanship aside from adornment and decorative detail. This has resulted in new and surprising forms. Nor is this decoration a result of a superficial desire to produce something new and different. Instead, it has developed gradually, had its failures and successes, and its flowering has only been attained by the continued efforts and high ideals of artists devoted to their work.

The history of French furniture of the last 20 years is in effect the story of a recommencement. The first real impetus of revolution came from the work of Wm. Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites of England. This influence was a healthful one based upon tradition, yet returning to nature for its inspiration. Morris and Walter Crane completely revolutionized the design of cotton materials, rugs and wall-paper, and also contributed some furniture forms which influence those of today. The organization of Morris' workshops connects him with l'ensembliers of modern decoration, and he may well be called the father of modern decoration.

In the French Exposition of 1889, the Japanese influence was apparent in the use of color and in the characteristic use of floral and other natural forms. A few years later, M. S.

Bing, one of the most active propagators of the arts of the Orient, in producing his Art Nouveau, made a contribution more within the taste of his times. It was marked by a love of rich woods, beautiful materials and a sumptuousness of color and grace of feminine line. In viewing these pieces in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, one is impressed by the mixture of romanticism and realism, and while uninteresting now, they must surely be classed as a step forward toward the realization of our present day forms and also perhaps a fairly good expression of their time.

Another date important in the evolution of modern decorative arts is the Russian Ballet presentation of Shéhérazade and Boris Godounow. The Iribian use of color in interiors produced a considerable influence, particularly in the work of the Atelier Martine, which produces interiors with a certain freedom and fantasy and the use of brilliant colors.

In 1910 the decorators of the Munich "Werkbund" were invited to exhibit in the French Salon. Their work was decidedly German in character. Simplicity prevailed and color was daringly contrasted. While the Munich workers gave no revelation of great cabinet work, they did possess a decorative conception and a gift for arrangement. The influence of the

Munich decorators upon modern French Decoration was very slight, the main result being a new impetus and an encouragement to the French in their own work. By the contrast they realized better how to stress the French character of their work, which they did by a reconciliation with the French styles of the 18th century. This resulted in a splendor and taste for graceful movement and beauty—an expression truly French. Even those who claim a great influence of Munich upon French Decoration must admit that the French art preceded the German in the research for a furniture to meet modern needs. Follot, Dufrène and Jallot were working before the appearance of Munich decoration in the Salon of 1910.

Yet we will not quibble over minutiæ. Whether the first real modern angled, dynamic chair was of German or French workmanship is not important. The growth of the spirit that brought about the concrete creation is the important issue. When and where was the modernistic spirit born? Without a doubt the modern spirit was born in France. Modern sculpture and painting grew, undisputedly, from the French germ. Its inception and growth can be traced in painting from the revolt of the classicist David, through In-

gres and Claude Lorrain and the Impressionism of Monet to Cézanne and Post-Impressionism where was cradled this spirit which blossomed, more particularly for our purpose—in the Cubism of Picasso, the French taught Spaniard. Here, I think we have the definite connection between the modern spirit in painting and modern furniture. Picasso introduced the dynamic form and characteristic color which we see in modern French furniture.

The German decorators may have worked out their own salvation; surely they have capitalized modern decoration, but to say that a nation, which for centuries past produced no notable furniture has now taken the lead in giving birth to modern furniture styles is possible but not probable.

There is no element in modern French decoration which cannot trace its form to an outgrowth of the same spirit which made modern French painting.

Influences of a different kind, fostering the growth of a new style, were not wanting. In 1889 the Société for the Encouragement of Art and Industry had founded L'École Boulle, an institution with training in both the theoretical and practical branches of furniture creation. In the École Boulle students at an early age—even as young as 12 years

—are given training in historical and original design relating to furniture. All designs are actually carried out in materials —metal—clay—wood carving—inlay; the actual pieces of furniture are also constructed from historical models and in the last year's work modern furniture designed and made. The training is based on the importance of a knowledge of both form and line in the construction of an article of furniture; that is, both the training of the artist and sculptor is demanded. This school is today under the direction of M. Fréchet, an active influence in the creation of modern furniture forms, and many well-known decorators had their schooling here.

Another definite influence is the work of the cubist painters, who have not only imposed their forms with interesting results, especially in the fabric designs and in forms of lighting fixtures, but also with less fortunate results upon the color of modern interiors. As a result of their teaching, one finds drab combinations of tans, yellows and dirty pinks—yet, what beautiful harmonies are possible with these hues and how finely the same have been composed in the figure prints of Utamaro!

These are the influences conditioning the French Deco-

rative Arts from the last half of the 19th through the first few years of the 20th century. Their history from 1900 to 1930 can be more completely understood by a review of the work of the créateurs of those years, the most important of whom are still active influences. For while there are general elements which form a recognized 20th century style yet there are no set rules or details of ornament for its production, but it varies according to each producer and the names and characteristics of each individual l'ensemblier will be necessary for a definite study of the style. The names and the work of these men are as important and should go down in the history of furniture forms as memorable, as those of Boulle, Reissener or Cressent.

The following is a table of the most influential créateurs, and while all are living and working now, they should be classed in the generations where perhaps their greatest influence was felt.

I am indebted to M. Leon Deshairs for this classification:

1900–1910	*vers 1919*
Leon Jallot	Pierre Chareau
Maurice Dufrène	René Prou

1910–1914	*Le Très Jeuns*
Francis Jourdain	Djo-bourgeois
Ruhlmann	E. Kohlmann
Süe et Mare	M. Matet
	Charlotte Perriand

There has been no attempt to give a complete list of the decorators now working in Paris, but, instead, to only mention those whose work has, by initiating certain varieties of form, been a necessary round in the ladder of Modern French Decoration. There are other decorators in Paris today whose furniture is as fine as the furniture of the decorators mentioned here, but they are not among the initiators of the style. These decorators will be mentioned in another chapter.

CHAPTER II

L'ENSEMBLIERS

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L'ENSEMBLIERS

In about 1910 the beginning of this interesting phase of modern French Decoration takes place. Momentarily the decorator begins to make drawings of complete interiors and the architect is forced into second place for a time. To indicate the part he expects to assume, the decorator now calls himself l'ensemblier. In turn, the architect has assumed the rôle of decorator and one finds both architect-décorateurs and décorateur-architects, the word l'ensemblier covering both classes of artists.

These modern l'ensembliers are the living forces in 20th Century French decoration. Upon each one of them depends the future of French decoration. Will they continue to hold their standards high? Will they rush after fashion, or will they labor to make things that will last, and objects of whose worth they themselves are convinced, rather than try to do something new? The existence of a score or so of l'ensem-

bliers, each working in his own individual manner, is the main reason why one finds no set and bound rules in modern French Decoration. And yet, with these interesting and necessary individual varieties, there is a certain unity which labels the combined results as 20th century products. In spite of the great individual differences of each créateur, two different schools of thought and workmanship are easily discernible. The one, the rational, is characterized by a desire to create houses in perfect accord with the motor, the aeroplane and the paquebot. These rationalists have chosen the straight line as the line of beauty and have emphasized its usefulness as the shortest distance between two points, and therefore they declare it in perfect accord with the direct life of the 20th century. Also in harmony with modern life and sanitation, they choose metal, marble, cement and tile as the main elements in the construction of interiors and furniture. Cubism has been a great influence in the work of the rationalists. In the words of Djo-bourgeois, one of the foremost rationalists, "the furniture is very simple and should be a part of the architecture. Forms should correspond to their purpose. Everything ought to be practical, nothing unuseful."

On the other hand, there is the group of traditionalists,

Boudoir in Sycamore and Lacquer. Rug, Leon Jallot. Salon, 1928

Leon Jallot, Decorator.

who, although they have broken with the forms of tradition, are nevertheless adherent to the principles which have governed former periods of decoration. They dislike the radical use of the straight line and claim that life and nature follow curves and, that to be harmonious, our interiors should also have curves. They maintain that our homes should be a contrast and a relief to the strenuous outside life of the times rather than constructed in harmony with it. They claim that beauty should have a place aside from usefulness and that delicate colors and fancy should play a part in every interior. Their chief characteristics are comfort and beauty. Ruhlmann, foremost of the traditionalists, says: "The modern style employs pure forms dictated by reason, beautiful proportion of volumes and elegance and directness of line. Added to these are beautiful inlays of precious materials and plaques of bronze, silver or ivory."

A consideration of each individual artist and of the ateliers who work in a sense truly original, will give a clearer reflection of the characteristics of the epoch.

The artists will be considered in decades as in Chapter I and their position in the text is not planned in conjunction with the merit of their work.

Leon Jallot.—A conservative. His furniture has the harmony and equilibrium of traditional French Art. And yet, he was the first to introduce iron nails, ivory and bronze into the construction and decoration of modern furniture. Leon Jallot is a collector and connoisseur of primitive arts. He has made a special study of the arts of China and Japan, and their influence is shown in his extensive use of multi-colored lacquers and in the gold patina of some of his furniture. He is also a wood carver of unusual ability. He believes that wood sculpture should be conditioned by the materials used, and so we find the technique of his wood sculpture varies, now in high relief and now in a delicately defined line etching. In the construction of his furniture, Leon Jallot uses both foreign and native woods and enhances their beauty by rearranging their grain to form patterns and arabesques of his own creation. M. Jallot was the first of the moderns to use the natural grain of the wood to form the decoration of furniture and he employs it with greater success than any other artist, in fact, it may be said to be one of the outstanding characteristics of his work.

Maurice Dufrène is a difficult artist to classify. One may call him a traditionalist, and yet, his showing in the 1928

Salon is extremely revolutionary. His position, however, as head of the atelier "La Maîtrise des Galeries Lafayette" makes it necessary for him to be swayed somewhat more by public taste than an artist who maintains his own individual shop. In the work of Maurice Dufrène one finds a fine sense of color and a love of intricate line design usually characterized by gentle and graceful curves.

Paul Follot is a traditionalist. Delicate colors and graceful feminine curves characterize his work. When he introduces the newer elements of iron or marble they are always subordinate to the general scheme. In the show rooms at Waring & Gillows, where M. Follot has recently instituted a modern decoration department, one sees delicate painted walls with leaves and flowers in tones of pink, green and silver. M. Follot stands solid against the introduction of industrial features into the decoration of houses. He believes that there is a need of beauty aside from comfort and usefulness. His dining-room in the 1929 Salon des Artists Décorateurs is a modern adaptation of traditional furniture.

Francis Jourdain cannot be classed either as a traditionalist or as a rationalist. His work is so remarkable and so perfect in proportion and in equilibrium that one does not

notice its extreme plainness. The lack of ornament is also supplied by the color introduced here and there in a rug, a lamp, or as in his own home, by goldfish in a built-in corner tank. The forms of his furniture are original and never the same, yet always adapted to their function and to their space, whether he is constructing a physical culture gymnasium, a shop interior, or a studio.

Ruhlmann is a traditionalist. While his furniture is perhaps the finest and most valuable that is being constructed in modern times, he can hardly be said to be in accord with the times, since tradition is his guide. Like Boulle and Cressent, he designs only for nobility—that is, only for those of noble income, for he refuses to be checked in his expenditure of time or costly materials. For this reason his interiors and furniture have a richness, gaiety and luxury not found in the work of the other modern decorators. Perhaps due to the same factors, we find a general likeness in all of his work and a theatrical elaborateness. His rooms are unusually large with high ceilings and tall windows. The drapes sweep the floor in folds, and large crystal chandeliers are used for lighting. These same characteristics appear in the chamber in the 1928 Salon and in the "Salle des Délibérations" in the new Chamber of

Office. The Walls are Parchment with a Shellac Finish. The Bureau and Bookcases are of Macassar, the Armchairs Upholstered in Velour and Leather. The Skylight Over the Desk is an Interesting Feature.

D. I. M., Decorators.

Commerce of Paris. Ruhlmann uses rare and precious materials—ebony and amaranth inlaid with ivory and costly metals. Yet all of the ornamentation and richness is made subordinate to fine proportions and gracefulness of the whole object or ensemble. His Studio in the 1929 Salon, however, shows that he, too, is being influenced by extreme modernism.

Süe et Mare in 1919 founded la Compagnie des Arts Français. For some years they exerted considerable influence upon French Decoration, but at the present time have dissolved partnership. The influence of the style Louis Philippe is seen in their work. Imagination and fantasy are also apparent in their work which is characterized by curved lines and motifs of fruit cornucopias and ribbon drapes. It is a sweet style. Needless to say, Süe et Mare are traditionalists.

Pierre Chareau is a rationalist. His work stands out in bold strength as one of the most individual of this decade. His work shows the influence of cubism. He is essentially a constructor. In his furniture, volumes and planes create lines audacious and severe, yet employed with logic. The beauty of plain wood surfaces interests M. Chareau more than inlay. In the construction of furniture he uses acacia, palisander, sycamore and ash, yet so beautifully finished and polished

are these surfaces that they take on qualities of more precious woods.

Robert Mallet-Stevens is an architect, who, in his extreme modernism, has created some interesting modern shops. He has a taste for simplicity, clearness, symmetry and direct harmonies. There is an unusual harmony between his architecture, and furniture and its contrasts to his exteriors.

L'Atelier Martine produces interiors alive with brilliant contrasting colors. There is color everywhere, in the drapes, the rugs, the accessories and even the furniture itself is painted in contrasting shades or in gold or silver. This atelier seems more in sympathy with the modern German school than with the French.

Djo-bourgeois is a rationalist, yet he works in a manner wholly different from the other radicals. His work is simple and refreshing as the first freshness of the morning. He is as good a decorator as he is an architect, yet it is the force and technique of the architect that we see in his work. He constructs in finely proportioned plain, flat surfaces, with a fine organization of space. He is absolute master of planes and massive volumes. Plain walls and simple spaces allow a fine circulation and organization of spaces and the rectangular

DINING ROOM.

Djo-bourgeois, Architect-Decorator.
Elise Djo-bourgeois, Textiles.

volumes of his furniture are in perfect harmony with the architecture. Severity, the straight line, built-in sofas and bookcases, and a lack of ornament characterize the unusual work of Djo-bourgeois. The textiles for his interiors are designed by Elise Djo-bourgeois and are angular in design and usually one color together with gray or a shade of tan or brown. The style of architecture of Djo-bourgeois is influenced by the Mediterranean. The furniture is usually made of simple woods together with metal and marble.

Kohlmann is one of the youngest of the modern French Decorators and may be classed as a radical. However, in his work we see a balance of decorative and constructive tendencies. Kohlmann received his training at L'École Boulle and is a constructor as well as a designer of furniture. He may be classed as one of the outstanding ébénistes of the modern age. Kohlmann's characteristic colors are related harmonies of brown, tans, yellows and orange with accents of metal and black. In the 1929 Salon he exhibits a bedroom in brown, tan, silver and lavender pink.

René Prou is a traditionalist. The gay French spirit lives in the fresh color and charming note of femininity of his interiors. Even the sworn enemies of modern art would not

hesitate to live in a room by René Prou and yet the modern spirit is not lacking.

Other well known modern French Decorators are Leleu, Dominique, Matet, Charlotte Perriand, René Herbst, M. Fréchet, Adnet, Raymond-Nicolas, Joubert & Petit, Rapin, L. Bouchet, Louis Sognot, Jean Frank, Gabriel Englinger and Mme. L. Renaudot, René Gabriel, and M. Guillemard.

One should distinguish between the work of the individual decorators, the majority of whose work is creation for a wealthy clientele, and that of the large department store whose work reaches a broader field and has tended to popularize the modern decoration. It is here, in the latter shops, that one may have furniture and ensembles created to meet the needs and purse of the average man. Naturally, the demands, problems, and resulting furniture of the two groups will differ considerably. The most important department store ateliers are "La Maîtrise", Galeries Lafayette, where Maurice Dufrène is in charge, "Pomone", Bon Marché, directed by René Prou, "Primavera", Au Printemps, whose head decorator is Mme. Chauchet-Guilleré, and the "Studium" au Louvre, with Kohlmann and his associate Matet.

CHAPTER III

ACTUAL TENDENCIES

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With so many individual artists creating in a manner characteristically their own, it is difficult to note any exact rules or characteristics that mark 20th century French furniture. In fact, there are no set rules, but we can determine certain characteristics which influence the work of all of the créateurs of furniture, and also relate with equal truth to all of the decorative arts of the period.

Never have the decorative arts been governed by such a balance of imagination and practicality. Imagination has taken the decorative arts out of the realm of the two dimensional unto the third and even the fourth dimension. The imagination of the artist has taken raw and seemingly uninteresting materials and gained astounding results. New experiences have been created for us by the combination and juxtaposition of unrelated lines, forms and colors. Imagination and fancy have played most successfully with artificial

light and a new era of lighting has been born. Fantasy, charm, and complete agreement of objects have combined in the imagination of the artist to create results altogether charming—and yet, with all, never have the decorative arts reached such a completely practical expression; never before has the object had such exact adaptation to its function. Sobriety and logic of line and form have made comfort and usability most important features in the modern decorative movement. There are three elements which stand out as fundamentals in the construction of the 20th century decorative arts: first, simplicity of design; second, use of unusual materials; third, perfection of construction.

The decorative arts of today are not only deep in the traditions of the past, but they are accepting and utilizing the materials and influences of the present as no other period has used its contemporary life. Art has found a place for the discoveries of the 20th century scientist, and is combining them with resulting beauty as well as economy and utility to meet the needs of present day life.

Modern art recognizes that there is a definite place for raw and unworked materials and that labor saving devices can be utilized successfully in the arts as well as in industry. Glass,

metal and marble, all simple surfaces, used in their raw state, have been successfully combined in the modern interior. The beauty of these materials is inherent, and will not alter with time or use. Asbestos and compo-board have been used in their natural state and found to possess not only fine texture, but other decorative possibilities as well as adaptability and cheapness of price.

Along with this use of practical scientific materials, we find a use of the exotic and rare woods. Whether this is based on tradition which employed such woods, or whether the use of amaranth and ebony came with the attention of design centered upon South African Arts is difficult to discern, so that one must divide the honors equally. The inlay of unusual and costly woods gives modern furniture a luxurious and rich appearance and also increases the intrinsic value of the actual pieces. These materials also lend an imaginative and fantastic note which relieves the matter-of-factness of much modern furniture.

There are no definite design elements, but one finds the presence of research in Chinese art, naturalism and cubism. If any design motifs be mentioned, it would be those drawn from tropical jungle sources, perhaps due to the influence of

negro art. Occurring and reoccurring are tropical leaves, fruits and flowers, as well as animals, including the monkey, boar, elephant and tiger. Twentieth century decoration has broken away from the meaningless copying of ancient motifs and in place of the Greek fret and other classic mouldings we find a true and simple line decoration created in the spirit of the present century. And yet one cannot mention any set motifs as peculiar to the period, for unlike furniture of other days, the ornamentation does not give a key to the recognition of the furniture of the 20th century—rather it is by line and form that we are able to note the modern decorative period.

In French furniture of other periods, one found a preference for applied decoration. Carving and metal work were often applied after the piece was constructed. They were simply additions and in no way a part of the structure of the piece. If we compare a Boulle cabinet with a cabinet of the 20th century on which metal has been used, we will find a great difference in the method of applying the metal. In the Boulle piece a thin network of metal forms a pattern upon the structure and ormolu mounts are tacked on the legs and feet *after the* main structure of *the piece is completed*. The

metal can be removed without impairing the use of the cabinet. In contrast, *metal enters into the actual construction* of modern furniture forming arms, legs, or inlay decoration, but always it is used to aid in the construction and to strengthen the workmanship. An interesting divergence between antique and modern is found in the construction of the legs. On antique pieces the legs and arms are usually separate entities added to the main body of the piece but not forming a part of it. In modern furniture design, the legs extend up and aid in the support of the main body, or often extend down as a part from the body itself, or, we find arms and legs one and the same piece, as in the Morris chair, and part of the necessary body structure as well. These changes simplify the construction as well as the appearance of modern furniture. They also announce the acceptance of the direct simple and economical path as the one of beauty as well as utility.

Simplicity has found its expression in the use of straight, unadorned and unbroken lines. Horizontal, perpendicular, and angled lines and simple half circle curves form the structural foundation of architecture, furniture and the minor decorative arts. Little use is made of transitional line or ornament and the direct statement of oppositional lines is accepted

as beauty. The horizontal is the dominant line used with the purpose of expressing rest and comfort. Even the lines of ornament repeat the simple construction lines and serve to build and strengthen as well as to decorate. The repetition of these simple lines in various widths and proportions result in an unusual strength of line giving the objects a virility which is one of its chief characteristics.

This simplicity of line structure and lack of excessive ornamental detail throws the burden of beauty upon the plain wood surfaces. Never before has the value of plain surfaces been so appreciated and their possibilities so fully developed. No longer is it necessary to apply marqueterie designs of leaves and flowers, for designers have found that the pattern of the wood grain itself is beautiful and that its arabesques can be used to form hitherto unknown and original designs. Plain surfaces also make possible new and unprecedented creations in paint and lacquer. In other periods the surfaces were broken by panels and decoration, but today there are no superimposed decorative features to detract from the bold plain surface of color.

The moderns have also discovered that even comparatively common surfaces such as beech and maple can be so

polished and worked that they take on newly revealed beauty. Then, too, public taste is again realizing the difference in the beauty of an object of hand workmanship as against one of factory production. Not that we can ever go back to créateur production solely, but I do believe that this return of great designers will show what can best only be done by designer-workmen and what can be turned out by factory mass production. We will find that simple productions relying on line and form rather than on beauty of detail or wood finish can be satisfactorily made in the factory, but that elaborate designs expensively conceived and laboriously created can never be copied with great success by a few turns of the machine. However, so important is line structure in modern French furniture that the adaptation to factory production seems favorable in many instances.

In this new age the treatment of form is different from that of other decorative periods. Form itself, volume or the third dimension, call it what you will, is ever present and all its possibilities taken into account. Lighting fixtures are made to reflect and form extra planes, and columns and curtains are hung to suggest more than one surface. Generally speaking, forms are simple, as are their bounding lines. Strong,

massive and comfortable we find these forms exceptionally well suited to the direct luxury loving life of the 20th century. Plain unbroken spaces are appreciated and their beauty is achieved only by fineness of proportion and balance of the relation of space to space and the beauty of simple flat or rounded wood surfaces.

The design is simple and the repetition of related forms so apparent that one might expect a too monotonous unity devoid of any variety. This was the fault of American Mission furniture, and it may, at times, seem the fault of modern French, but notice a little closer how subtly this chest front curves—how that apparently flat desk is made of different levels so that it seems to be a patterned surface. Such little varieties tend to relieve the heavy strength and otherwise stolid unity of many pieces; yet always, all gentle curves or decorative elements are subordinated to the strong, forceful and masculine tendency of the whole.

Not only is the line and form relationship of single objects harmonious within the object itself, but so great is the harmony between all the objects in a room that it is possible to construct an ensemble upon the same structural scheme as an artist would use for a picture. Thus one finds that the

TABLE AND CHAIRS COVERED IN BLACK PATENT LEATHER.

Maison Commune.

Maurice Dufrène.

ideal modern room is not only comfortable, convenient and beautiful in itself, but also as a tableau or stage setting and the objects are also so well placed for everyday use that it is not necessary to disturb its artistic balance. A fine example of this modern decoration is so related in form as to have a sculptural appearance as though the whole ensemble were carved from one block.

Another important element in Modern French furniture is *comfort*. Our ideas of comfort change from age to age, and what would be considered the height of comfort to a "stayed" lady or a "wigged" gentleman of the Beau Brummel decade, would hardly meet the demands of our free and easy life today. Our manner of dress and coiffure, and even our liberal ideas, influence our posture and thus the chairs of an age when people sat like puppets could not conform to our half reclining habits of sitting. The change in these manners and customs of life have been met by modern furniture; chairs and other pieces of furniture are low set, broad, strongly built, and luxuriously cushioned. Never have furniture makers possessed such facilities for catering to comfort as in this age of modern invention. Not only do the chairs and sofas satisfy the modern demand of comfort, but, tables, in-

cidental book stands, smoking stands, dressing tables and numerous combination pieces are made to meet each definite need and purpose. Not only are line and form carefully studied to create repose and comfort, but materials are chosen whose surface textures suggest feelings synonymous with comfort. Psychology has played an important part. Rooms are made to suggest comfort to the mind and thinking comfort when sitting in a comfortable chair is known to create a sensation of super-comfort.

Combined with the modernistic futuristic elements of 20th century decoration are old time elements and influences which also play an important part in the whole ensemble. The use of lacquer on furniture and accessories, such as screens and boxes, comes from the Chinese and Japanese, who have long practised lacquering and who for centuries held the secret of a true lacquer finish. However, only recently the secret has been discovered by a Frenchman and modern lacquers can now be made with all the subtle beauty of color and durability of the old lacquer of Coromandel. There is also an influence from Egypt. Egyptian furniture has the same directness and simplicity that we find in modern furni-

ture. Egyptian furniture also employed bone and ivory as inlay decoration.

From the Japanese may have come the love of unsymmetrical balance, indeed, I can see much more of the Japanese influence in Modern French Interiors than the créateurs themselves are wont to acknowledge.

The use of exotic woods undoubtedly reverts to the early Louis, while the use of metal may be brought down from that time also, or may bespeak the Roman use of metal and marble. Wherever this use of metal came from, undoubtedly it was its excellent employ on the motor cars of the present age that brought it to the modern decorator's attention. In the past he found support for his idea.

The use of corner columns made of small cylinders reminds one of the vertical supports of Gothic Cathedrals. This repetition of cylindrical forms is found not only in the architecture but also in the construction of furniture and of minor articles of decoration.

The two schools of modern decoration are marked by their use of color. Ruhlmann, Follot, Dufrène, the traditionalists, do not limit themselves, but feel free to draw from the past sources of color as well as from nature color. Yet strange

to say, while one finds a more pleasing and saner use of color in their work than in that of the revolutionists, one also finds a decided preference admitted or unadmitted for grays, blacks, taupes and light pinks, blues and greens. Dufrène uses related colors in succession. On the other hand in the work of the revolutionists one finds a decided influence of cubist color and a reliance upon their dictates in the use of "sad colors". In the 1928 Salon, one found this repeated use of "sad colors" —grays, tans, browns, black, dull pink and metallic colors. Indeed, it must be said that the modernists are not colorists in our past sense of the term, and even if one accepts the "sad color" standard, these harmonies are monotonous and unresourceful. However, the use of dark and light values is understood and practised to a degree of beauty never before reached outside of the arts of Japan and China. Dark inlays in the light wood, and light inlays in dark surfaces bring in subtle harmonizing and contrasting color notes and their values aid in the balance and appearance of the ensemble.

Texture is another element in modern decoration that has never until this age been fully understood or its value made really useful in the decoration of a room. One reason for the neglect of texture is that we have never had a vocabu-

lary to express our reactions to texture as we can to color, for example. We may feel that an object is rough or smooth, but we have no words to express the luxuriousness of velvet, or the cold smoothness of marble, yet how definitely we do re-act to both. The modernists have appreciated both these textures. In their desire to achieve comfort along with usefulness, they have sought the most luxurious textures with which to upholster their furniture forms. Luxurious, yet strong, practical textures are used—velours, leathers, damasks of cotton and jute, furs of various animals. The rugs are of deep soft hand tufted wool nap. The texture of the furniture itself is almost always smooth and of a high glossy finish. Often the walls are of wood fibers and grasses of rough texture, or of shiny, smooth, inlaid straw, or parchment; and marbles of all colors, and mirrors are harmonious with the smooth shiny finish of the furniture. But whatever the texture or material, it will be noted that underlying all is the purpose of suggesting and creating comfort and roundness of surface, which relieves the apparent angularity of the furniture form.

These are a few of the most important tendencies that are forever present influencing the creation of the new orientation of 20th century French decorative art.

CHAPTER IV

ARCHITECTURAL BACKGROUND

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Backgrounds are as important in the making of a picture or a room as any of the elements that comprise the final composition. In all historic periods the background, or the architectural structure of a room, has been important, as a setting for the other objects of the room, enhancing by its harmony, or adding to the beauty of furniture and bric-a-brac by its contrast. The frescoed and the plain stucco wall of the Italian Renaissance equally well served the purpose of setting off the carved walnut furniture, the one giving an added richness and splendor, the other increasing the formal dignity and unobtrusive beauty by well proportioned yet plain spaces. Because a background was to be unadorned, was never a reason for neglecting, or lessening the time spent on its design. Backgrounds played an important part in the past great periods of French decoration, and many historic palaces are viewed today solely for what remains of the architectural back-

grounds of their rooms. From these backgrounds we are able to gain a fair knowledge of how the furnished rooms appeared, for the harmony of motifs between the furniture and the background was so perfect that one reflected the other, except for differences in scale and proportion. So important is the value of a background that beautiful and valuable furnishings may appear to effect against one background, and seem really ugly in another setting. Thus it would be fatal to try to group Louis XVI furniture against an English oak paneled wall.

Backgrounds are ever present conditioning every other article in the room. The color or figure of a wall can set the emotional key for the whole room. The wall space behind an article of furniture is a part of each furniture grouping as it meets the eye, and even affects it to the extent that the same furniture would need to be grouped differently against a dark wall than against a light wall.

All these factors seem to have been taken into consideration during the periods of fine furniture. It was only in the 19th century when backgrounds began to be manufactured by machine and moved bodily into rooms that their relation to the other articles of decoration was neglected. A few years

Dining Room in Villa at St. Clair.

Djo-bourgeois.

ago decorators, rebelling against the red, green and offensive large figures of backgrounds set up the rule of the neutral wall. Now they failed for the same reason as the copyists had failed. They neglected to count the background as a part of the picture. A wall may be neutral, but it must also function in the general decorative schedule and the wall's effect upon the furniture must be taken into consideration when choosing a wall color. Nor can we definitely argue for plain or for figured walls. Each room is an individual problem, and its background treatment must be decided in relation to its furniture apart from any other room or any other furniture.

It is now easy to understand why modern French furniture needs new and modern background. Modern French furniture in the setting of the Palace of Versailles would be absurd. Likewise, the same background for all modern furniture would not only be tiresome, but unsuitable as well. Just as modern furniture of one créateur is unlike that of another, so should the setting for one type of furniture differ from that for the furniture of another créateur.

In trying to visualize a typical setting for modern French furniture of the 20th century, we must remember that there

are no set and bound rules or formulas. Generally, however, we find walls of plain construction materials, such as plaster or compo-board, or we find walls the structure of which is covered by figured fabrics, papers or wood fibers. The former might be classed as simple backgrounds and the latter as decorated. The bareness and austerity of the simple walls, however plain they may appear to some, add the qualities of repose, sincerity, permanence and dignity. Such rooms serve as foils to the furniture and give each piece an added accent of beauty, whether the piece be of simple structure and sparse ornament, or richly decorated with pattern and color.

The walls of the simple constructional interior are generally of plain, rough-surfaced plaster in some neutral shade, or of unfinished compo-board. The walls of Djo-bourgeois have a simple flat meeting with the ceilings, or are often slightly rounded at the corners. Many walls, however, are divided into surfaces of different levels, sunken panels or alcoves often framed by a series of different gradating surface borders. The ceiling often gradates up by squares of different sizes and levels. Corners are often filled with sets of various sized cylinders, or by fluted square columns. Windows are generally large and to the floor, but are divided into

BEDROOM IN ASH. SALON, 1928.

E. Kohlmann, Decorator.

small panes. They are generally set deep within the wall or in a recessed alcove. Doors are also recessed and are usually made of beautifully grained wood in its natural state. They have either square or arched tops.

Book cases are sunken within the wall and we find occasional shelves built where they may be used in connection with a chair or sofa.

Fireplaces are small, low and have no chimney-pieces showing. The space above the mantel is usually occupied by a simple panel of glass. Vertical lines are generally stressed in the construction of the fireplace and here again we see the repetition of different leveled surfaces side by side, which by the play of light and shadow allow for pattern of form as well as line. Fireplaces are usually of concrete to match the walls or of various colored marbles, gray predominating.

There is almost no limit to the resources that may be employed in the decoration of modern walls. The decorative practices of the ages are at the service of the modern decorator and even though he may not wish to copy the exact process, it is at his door to aid in firing a new inspiration. Thus we find that while there are no rooms, except the bath, that imitate the old Byzantine mosaic, the processes of the mosaic

has been revived in the straw inlay for walls and brilliant coloring, and picturesque scenes may be seen in modern straw inlay equal to those in the mosaic of Theodora. The old fresco process has been revived, and we find it used not only in panels but to cover whole walls.

Fabrics of all kinds, wallpapers, and lacquer panels, the processes learned from ancient sources, but the designs modern and suited to each individual interior, are all at the service of the modern decorator.

Wallpapers of modern design showing both geometric and floral patterns are used to give patterned walls. But more often one sees the use of textiles. A heavy material which is a combination of linen and jute is particularly favored. It comes in all manner of modern geometric patterns and is usually made in two tones of the same color which together with its texture, gained from a damask weave, makes it a most satisfactory background for furniture. Silk damasks and gold and silver materials are also used in more elaborate rooms, and checked and plaid ginghams are hung on simple walls. When it is desired that only a portion of the background be figured, we often find a panel or an alcove covered with material which is either hung flat or in various styles of folds.

BEDROOM. FIGURED TEXTILE ON WALL. BEDS IN ALCOVE.

Marcel Guillemard, Decorator.

A new treatment of walls is found in the application of a thin wood-shaving which can be put on the wall to form an elaborate inlay pattern of brilliant color as used by Paul Poiret, or may be applied in simple squares or rectangles of neutral color.

Plaster walls are often frescoed in all-over modernistic pattern or a fresco scene is applied to an otherwise plain wall. These frescoes are often executed by well-known modern French artists.

The floors of the modern interior, when uncovered by rugs or carpet, are either parqueted with geometrical patterns of wood or inlay with colored marbles. In both these processes modernism reverts to antique customs. Yet the patterns of the parquetry and inlay are as modern as textile fabric designs. Tile designs in various colors are seen, especially on the floors of bathrooms and kitchens, where they appear in striking contrasts of colors. Rugs of modernist design seem to be favored more than neutral carpets as a modern floor covering.

Boudoir.

Louis Sognot, Decorator.

CHAPTER V

FURNITURE

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FURNITURE

Furniture forms were never so free to follow the dictates of art and craftsmanship as in the present 20th century. Democracy has broken down formal ceremonies so that the chair and the stool are no longer reserved for certain persons, but those who have the money to buy chairs, may buy and sit in whatever type their money can acquire. The free distribution of wealth into the middle classes has also aided the cabinet maker and put his business upon a more staple basis. Where formerly he constructed only by order, now he may assemble a stock where his customers may choose if they do not care to wait the necessary time for the article to be constructed to order.

Twentieth century styles hold no check upon the cabinet maker. Costume and furniture have always had a close relationship. High-backed chairs were undoubtedly constructed

to form a background for ladies' hairdress and the arms of chairs were first opened and then moved back to accommodate the ample skirts of women. Chairs and tables had stretchers to afford the occupants a shelf for their feet and wing chairs sheltered the sitter from a draught.

All these necessary demands of manners and customs are removed to-day. Women's dress, never more simple, clings to the body and has no appendages to be protected or to hinder furniture design. The chair may now fit the requirements of the human body. Architecture has satisfied all the demands of comfortable living. Rooms are heated and protected from draughts, and sunshine and artificial light are regulated.

Then what are the furniture needs of this 20th century, so free from artificial demands? *Comfort* and *beauty*. Needs which existed in all other great furniture periods, but which never before were allowed to develop so freely without minor intrusions of other necessities. The 20th century is a comfort loving age. The love of beauty is also more generally distributed than in any other age. But beauty to the 20th century is a different type of beauty than that which adorns the Chartres Cathedral, than that which adorned the bergère of Louis XIV. Beauty to the 20th century is efficiency and

MEUBLE BOUCHE. DECORATIVE PATTERN IN PALISANDER WOOD.

Leon Jallot, Decorator.

materialism as opposed to romance and arabesque. Beauty in this day and age must give a reason for her existence.

In harmony with 20th century demands and ideals, furniture now relies to a great extent upon beauty of materials themselves as opposed to applied ornament. The surface and grain of woods and the textures and weave of stuffs give a strong, solid and virile beauty. Simplicity and practicality in the forms of the various pieces of furniture create an efficient beauty closely akin to that which makes the electric washer more beautiful than the old hand machine.

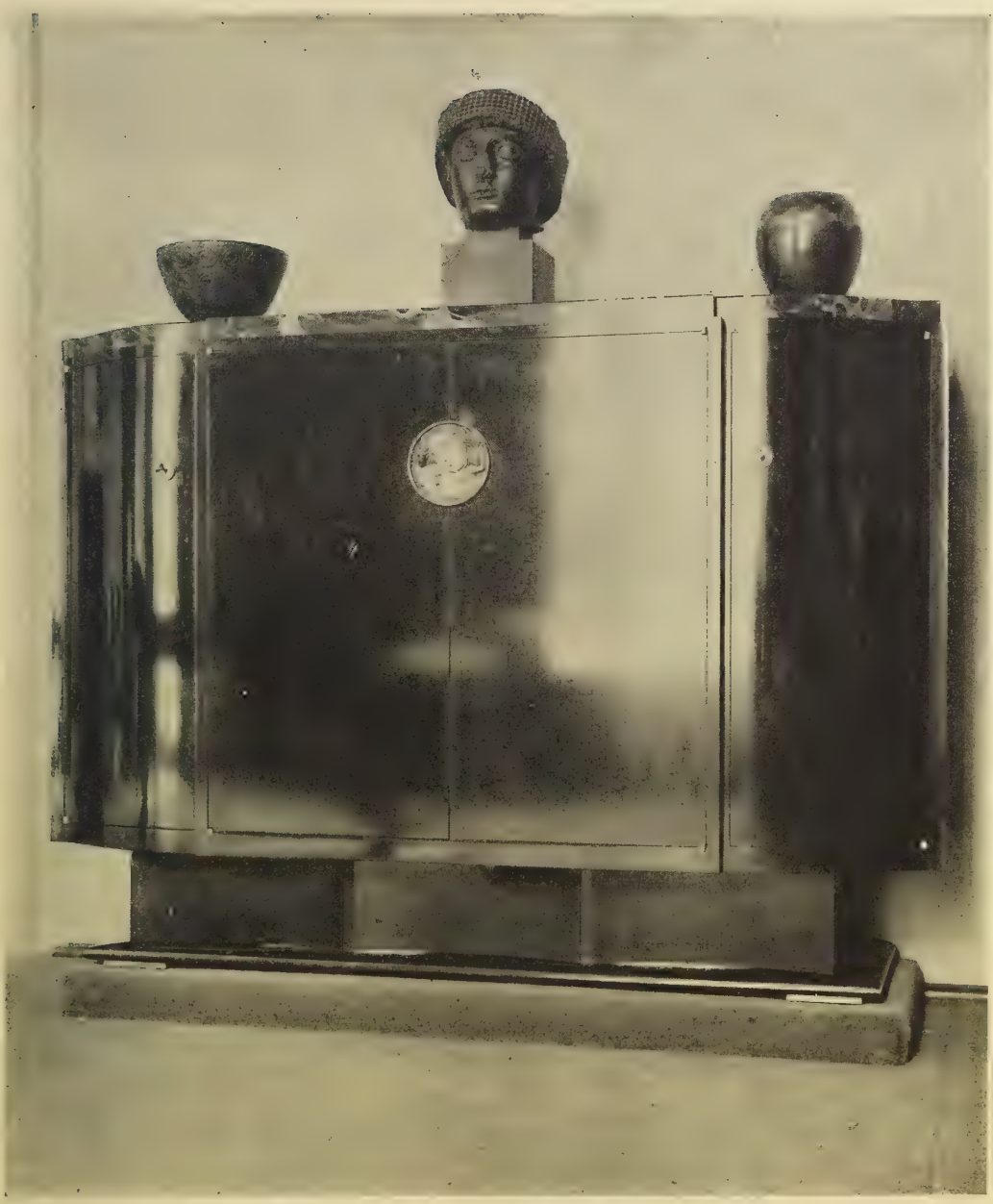
A newly constructed idea of beauty is necessary that we may appreciate 20th century furniture. And yet, we need not throw away our old standards of beauty, but merely strip them of their romantic and Victorian qualities and boldly face their structure. And there we find it—the basis of all beauty —a fine relation of *lines, forms* and *colors*. These fundamentals were the bare structure of the most elaborate Boulle cabinets or Louis XVI commodes and are also the governing features of French furniture to-day. When we meet our old friends naked, we hesitate to recognize them. With our minds swept clear of old cobwebs, let us examine the various furniture forms of the 20th century.

CHAIRS:

For the past few years, society has refused to sit properly in its chairs as before the war, so now the chairs are made to conform to the lolling posture. If we do not like it and if we still have a Victorian stay in our backs, we must blame our fellow laymen and not the cabinet maker, who has only been keen to read and translate their thoughts before they themselves knew what they wanted.

One type of modern armchair is low and heavy. Its only legs are a block of wood set flush with the floor. It is made to take the tired lunge of the golfer just returned from 27 holes of play, or of the tennis enthusiast who rushes in for after play drinks. On some chairs of this type the wood extends higher and gives the appearance of the old peasant chairs that were made from a stump of wood. The chairs of this general type are usually U or ⊔ shaped, and their sides are heavily padded and upholstered with soft and luxurious materials. They often rest on low ball feet.

Another type of upholstered chair is rectangular in form and closely resembles the Morris chair, but with closed-in upholstered arms, or arms and legs formed of one solid slab of wood.



CABINET—WITH BRONZE PLAQUE, MARBLE TOP.

Ruhlmann, Decorator.

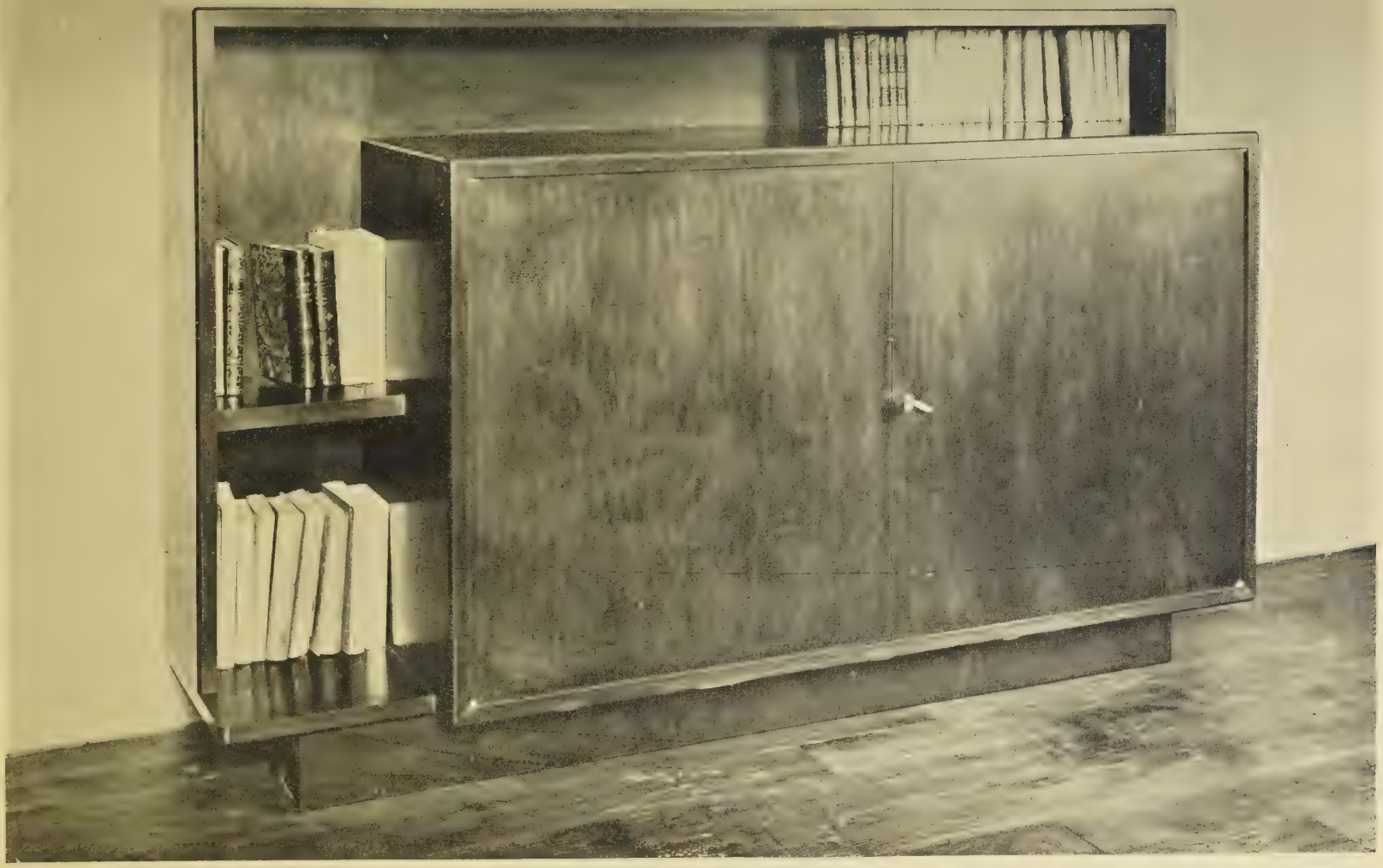
A smaller type of armchair has tapering rectangular legs, these raising it farther off the floor. Akin to this type, is the dining room chair. Its general contour suggests 18th century types, but it is of heavier proportions and more solidly built. Often iron, or some type of metal pipe, takes the place of wooden legs on these chairs, particularly on the furniture of Djo-bourgeois and Pierre Chareau.

The mouldings on all chairs are free from carving or any type of applied ornament. Except for a few spaced lines, the surfaces are flat wood, highly polished and beautifully grained. Chairs are supplied with deep down cushions and pliable springs.

TABLES:

There are long, rectangular library tables with closed supports at each end, or a modification of the lyre form, holding each end, and held together by a connecting stretcher which rests on the floor. The typical modern table is, however, the small square or circular table. Modern manners and customs demand the small table convenient to each chair or sofa, where one may find light, a current magazine, and a smoke. The small tables may be of average height or low,

but the tendency is to make them quite low. The circular tables are supported by the curved legs which slant toward the center and end in a small oval block, or by one square or cylinder leg ending in an oval block. Again they may be an oval block which has legs and shelves and turned on its side resembles a mill wheel. The butcher's block, set upon heavy balls, is also a type of table used. A favorite type of small table is built upon the square, and is divided asymmetrically into various levels of shelves. These small tables are often built upon more than one level and extend up to hold a vase of flowers or bronze statue. Small reading tables also are made which have a series of tongue shelves operating from one central screw. Some of these tables have marble or mirror tops; other similar tables are constructed wholly of glass and wrought iron. Dining room tables are usually rectangular and have solid end legs, straight or curved, or a long solid form through the center which serves as a support and is often fastened to the floor. Or, they may have one cylinder or square support fastened to a block of wood. Some have marble tops harmonizing or contrasting with the wood, and others have mirror tops. The most radical dining room tables are constructed of metal with marble tops. Charlotte Perriand



CABINET.

Pierre Chareau.

exhibited such a table in the 1928 Salon with metal swivel chairs to match.

CABINETS:

The first cabinets surmounted chests of drawers and were used to store papers, valuable china or books. However, the cabinet of the china collector would be an imposing structure of more elegant design on legs. The 17th century was rich in cabinets as separate pieces of furniture. The modern French cabinets are a cross between these 17th century cabinets and the commode. They are usually about the height of a commode but open with doors as a cabinet. Their fronts are divided into divisions—symmetrically or asymmetrically. One piece by Dominique has an open glass case in the center for a vase. This has three small drawers below and large doors open on either side of the glass panel. A cabinet by Ruhlmann is called Bibliothèque, and has doors in the center and a tier of open book shelves at either end. Another cabinet has doors in the front and slants back at angles toward the wall. Maurice Jallot designs a tall cabinet with doors in the center and glassed-in shelves at either end for bric-a-brac. Another cabinet has its three door spaces on different levels and has a

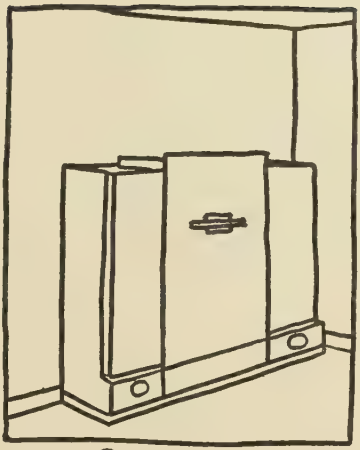
small shelf at the center top for books. Still another cabinet is composed of two cylinder cases with glassed-in shelves in the center space.

Cabinets are often of such proportions that they extend the complete length of a wall and are made up of alternate door and drawer spaces. Cabinets usually have marble tops and are ornamented with metal plaques and handles. A few years ago these cabinets were inlaid with elaborate designs of marquetry but now one seldom sees more than a simple motif in ivory or in some one contrasting wood. The cabinet, however, is one of the most interesting pieces of modern furniture and the one that in its design and workmanship comes nearest to attaining the heights reached by the finest cabinet makers of old. Twentieth Century cabinets are already finding places in museums.

DESKS:

The writing desk of the 20th century French designer is a desk in the true sense of the word and not a secretary. Various levels seem to add to the efficiency of the desk. While there are both symmetrically and asymmetrically constructed desks, the one of unequal balance seems to predominate. A

JOURDAIN



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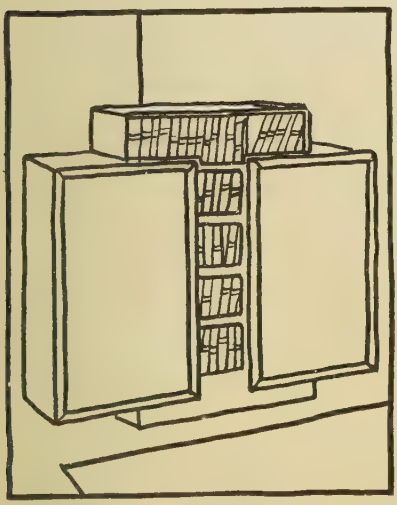
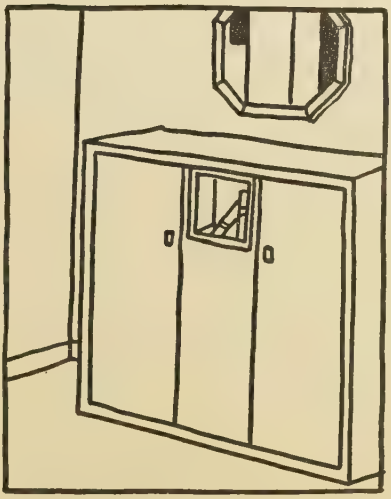


JACQUES ADNET



R GABRIEL

recent competition in Paris had for its theme, the ladies' writing desk and its seat. The result revealed much imagination and ingenuity upon the part of the designers. Men's writing desks are of similar structure, but heavier built and of greater proportions.

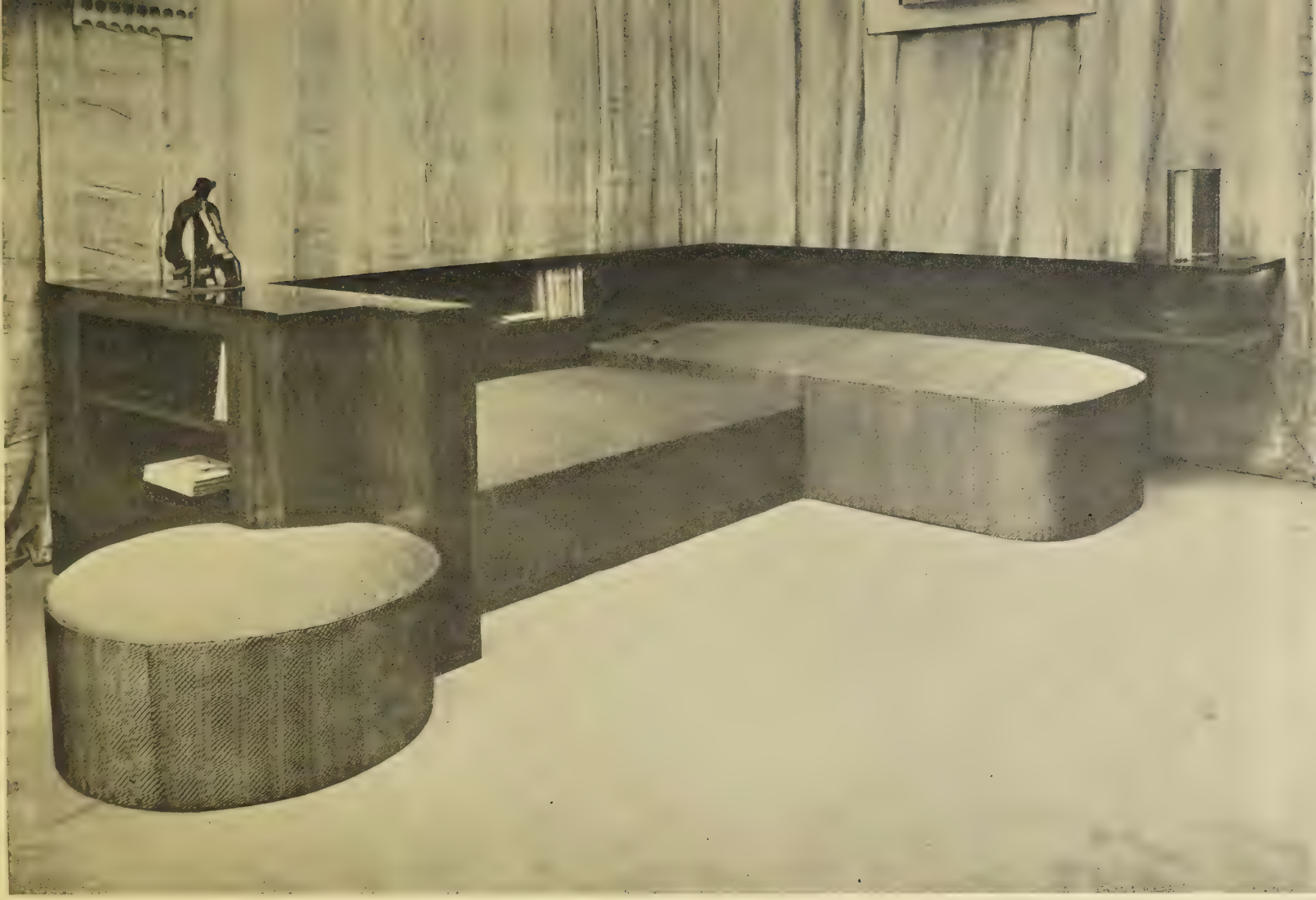
SOFAS:

The first sofa was a joining of chairs with the extra legs retained. Now, however, the best designs have lost all evidence of being two or three joined chairs. There is a type of modern sofa which has forms similar to many modern chesterfields—heavily upholstered, but lower and set upon a solid wooden base or low squat feet. However, we usually find them designed to fit some particular wall space, an alclove or a space between or underneath the windows. The custom of placing the sofa in a certain space in the room has led to the sofa being built in as a part of the architecture. Examples of this built-in sofa are seen in the work of Djobourgeois. Another type of sofa is formed by a combination of couches and end tables placed against the walls of a corner. Adnet exhibited such a piece in the 1927 Salon and Pierre Chareau showed one in a gallery on Faubourg St. Honoré in

the summer of 1928. These combination sofas are the outcome of a general tendency to construct combination pieces. Allied with these are bureau-bookcases and bookcase-cabinets, and desks built into the wall. The old type of moveable combination pieces with high tops are no longer in use. Instead, when one wishes a combination piece one builds to accommodate it or constructs it as though it were a part of the architecture.

BEDS:

It is a far cry from the bare Gothic bedroom with its high tester-topped bed, chest, stool, prie-dieu, fireplace and cold, tiled floor, to the luxurious comfort of the French bedroom today. Closely sealed walls, carpeted floors and modern heating apparatus, together with every article for milady's comfort, aid in making the modern bedroom an inviting place to sleep and rest. Never before have beds reached the degree of comfort attained by the efficient springs of modern industry, together with the comfort inducing designs of the modern cabinet maker. Beds are broad and low set, their lines suggestive of rest. They are often set upon a low platform. Beds are also set in nitches or alcoves and have small



Combination Piece in Natural Walnut.

Pierre Chareau.

night tables and electric light fixtures built within their head boards. Beds are of wood, the head and foot boards usually each moulded into one piece. Double beds are more popular than twin beds; the latter when seen are also of ample proportions. Beds are often beautifully inlaid with ivory or precious woods, and even metal and marble are used in their construction. The bed cover most in demand is of fur or with some type of fur banding.

DRESSING TABLES:

The ingenuity of the French decorator has created modern dressing tables to meet even the most fastidious of milady's tastes. The origin of the dressing table is French and dates from the "poudreuse" made for Madame Pompadour in the reign of Louis XV. In those days it was a delicate little piece of furniture used for the make-up, but the fact that women often had them brought into their drawing rooms for use, allows us to draw the conclusion that make-ups were not so complete in those days as in the 20th century. Today the French dressing table has the convenience and efficiency of a laboratory. The ample proportions, drawer space and large mirrors, together with sanitary marble or glass tops, make the

dressing table as useful and beautiful as could be imagined. Dressing tables are low set and usually placed in front of a window, after the English manner. Together with their accompanying chairs these dressing tables make an altogether charming piece of furniture.

It is interesting to note that with the great care of workmanship that is given to each individual piece, there are however an increasing number of pieces of architects' furniture being built, that is, furniture built into the general structural plan of the house itself. We find bookshelves, nitches, cabinets, dining room sideboards, and even mirrors sunk within the walls of the house. And the backs and ends of beds and sofas are often extensions of the house walls.

This use of actual structural lines is apparent in all modern furniture construction. No matter how fine the materials, or how unique the design, the structure lines are always frankly emphasized. Compare this sincere acceptance of necessities of workmanship with the Reissener commodes of Louis XV and XVI, which sought by means of applied decoration to give the illusion that their fronts were made in one mould. So solid and strong is the construction of modern furniture that it should stand the strain of decades of wear.

FIBER AND STEEL FURNITURE. SALON, 1928.

Maurice Dufrène. "La Maîtrese," Galerie Lafayette.

The only delicate element of modern furniture is its high polish, which would surely need to be renewed from time to time.

For materials and methods of workmanship, the modern age has the inspiration of past centuries of antique furniture still to be viewed in the museums. Inlay, veneer, lacquer, marquetry and metal combinations, all find precedent in the furniture of other days. Commerce has brought the markets of the world to the door of the French cabinet maker. From the mines and chemical factories come metals in their natural and alloy forms. Marbles of all colors are available for use. Side by side with humble gray and white marble, we find Egyptian green, turquoise blue, and Carrara-red, pink and green, autin-red, gray, and violet. White and gray veinings on a black ground and splashed all over with orange-yellow, or brocate, a marble with the surface of a flowery brocade.

From the forests of India and Africa come exotic woods, ebony, thuya, macassar, amboyna, amaranth, palisander and satinwood.

Every combination of color and tone is possible by the inlay of metal and ivory, and veneer of precious woods. For purples they have amaranth, palisander and violet-wood;

calambour, green ebony and lignum-vitæ give bright greens. Jacaranda and ebony produce black and gray. Lemonwood and yellow sandalwood give yellows. Mahogany, brazil wood, coral wood, locust, grandilla and many others produce red tints of every variety.

Native walnut, beech, elm and hickory are used with unusual success and the fruit trees furnish woods for inlay. Cherry, walnut, almond, palm, apricot, pear and chestnut are among those most in use.

Lacquer and duco finishes are often applied to modern furniture, but the French use these processes to a much less degree than the Austrians. The only French atelier that uses colored furniture to any great extent is Martine. Leon Jallot favors lacquer in dull gold tones. His use of lacquer is attributed to Japanese and Chinese research.

The size and weight of modern French furniture has necessitated a somewhat fixed and permanent arrangement of the articles in a room. It has been previously stated that beds and sofas generally are placed in alcoves or nitches and that they are often actually built as a part of the architecture. Mirrors are built in, over mantels and commodes. The cabinet is a piece of furniture which, because of its size, usually is

DINING ROOM IN PERSIAN WALNUT. SEATS IN SHARKSKIN.

Maurice Jallot, Decorator.

placed to dominate one side of the room. The large pieces of furniture are placed against the wall in formal balance and the smaller chairs and tables arranged out into the room. Furniture is grouped so that it is ready for use. This grouping, because it is convenient and orderly, also solves the problem of beauty of arrangement in the best possible manner.

SMOKING ROOM.

Louis Sognot, Decorator.

CHAPTER VI

TEXTILES

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TEXTILES

Textiles have had a glorious history in the past. Made as banners they commemorated an eventful assemblage, were carried in procession in the streets, or hung from doorways and balconies, or festooned to adorn shrines in the churches. Robes of great men, chasubles of the church dignitaries, all textiles of the royal rank, mingled in the history and romance of earlier days. Even today, fine damasks and brocades play an important rôle in the Catholic church service.

It was in textile form that the victories of William the Conqueror were recorded by Matilde, and from these embroidered tapestries we today read history. The most important history of France is recorded in the woven tapestries of the Gobelins.

Textiles formed our first clothing and our first walls, and textiles aided in the launching of our first airships. The Persian carried his prayer rug, spread it and knelt eastward

toward his god. Superstition, religion, history, custom, and industrial progress pass before us in textile form. The invention of a loom or the discovery of a dye stuff is recorded in actual fabrics which hold their secrets tighter than the tombs of Egypt. And yet, as far as we have progressed since the Pharaoh days of Egypt, so developed was their textile industry that today we decorate with fabrics of modern design made upon an old foundation weave of Egypt.

Yet, as glorious as was the past of textiles, and in a country where they reached a supreme triumph, they were finally allowed to gradually sink to mediocrity of workmanship and materials until they no longer, at the beginning of the 19th century, held their high place, but declined into inferior products made to meet the taste and demands of an average unartistic public.

French modern textiles have sprung as the lotus from the mire of a preceding century.

Tapestries were affected by the general decadence of French Decorative Art at the end of the 19th century. Here, however, the decline was one of design, rather than technique. Gobelins outputs were prodigious, but for lack of satisfactory contemporary designs the cartoons were copied from ancient

Dining Room in Synthetic Lacquer—Fresco on Wall. Rug by Max Vibert. Salon, 1927.

Maurice Matet.

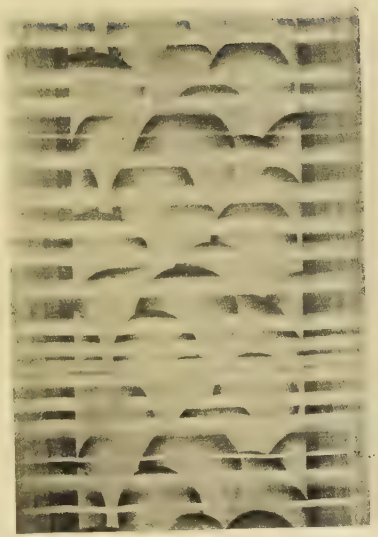
models of Le Brun or Boucher or "Le Ciel d'Homère d'Ingres" or "la Justice de Trajan" of Delacroix. Gobelins, Beauvais and Aubusson all retained the perfection of their weaves, but until the advent of the modern renaissance, their designs for the past century had lost their close connection with the weaving process. Super-realistic cartoons had taken the place of designs made with a knowledge of the requirements and limitations of the tapestry weave. However, with the appearance of such designers as Charles Dufresne and Robert Bonfils and Gustave-Louis Jaulmes for the Gobelins, and G. L. Jaulmes, Raoul Dufy and Maurice Iaquoy for Beauvais tapestries and various independent artists who designed cartoons for the Aubusson factory, the success and artistic recovery of the tapestry looms was assured. Such titles as "Buses in the Forest", "Outdoor Sports" and "Modern Dance" suggest the new themes of French 20th century tapestries. Such subjects as these may be seen as the upholstery on modern chairs and sofas in the Beauvais or Aubusson tapestry or as wall hangings of Gobelins.

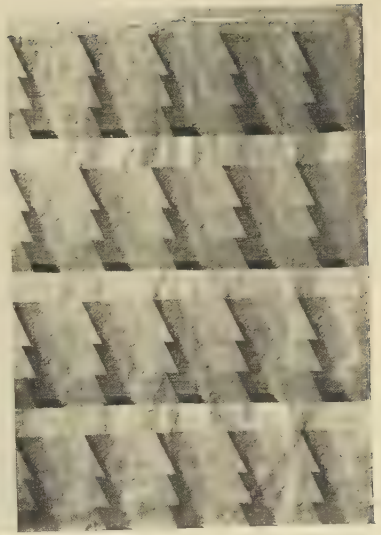
Although the tapestries are modern in appearance and the motifs used such as the aeroplane and tennis racket suggest a modern world, the design, by its subordinance to the weave,

gives an unsophisticated and simple effect similar to Gothic tapestries. Colors are those prevailing in contemporary decoration, but are distributed to conform with and to strengthen the durability of the weave and wearing quality of the material.

With the modernization of the ancient tapestry looms, woven tapestries are able to take their place, and be used with harmonious results in the most radical of modern interiors.

Three influences were present in the unfolding of the modern trend of decoration as applied to rugs. In France from the earliest times the presence of Oriental rugs and their perfection discouraged French efforts and only the worthwhile French creations received any attention. As a result of this competition the best French Savonnerie and Aubusson carpets rank with Persian rugs in both technical and artistic elements. Their weave, color and design all reached a perfection similar to that attained by the Persian craftsmen. A similarity between the weave of the old Persian and the Savonnerie carpets gave the latter the name "point Sarrazin". That a carpet should be "a mosaic in wool" was a motto governing the manufacture of these Savonnerie rugs and the finest artisans in France were employed designing these cartoons and weaving





FABRICS OF COTTON AND JUTE.

Rodier.

at these looms. The tradition of the Savonnerie is an active factor in the weaving of modern rugs.

Another influence which is present in the making of the modern French rug is the exotic element of the Orient. The greatest lesson taught by the Oriental influence was that of color. From China and Japan the French also received inspiration for naturalistic flower and foliage designs. Léon Jallot found inspiration for his rug designs in his passion for Oriental things. The first attempts to introduce modern art motifs in rugs was made by Maurice Dufrène and Paul Follot. From this time on, these and other independent artists created designs for rugs and the individuality and invention of these artists produced new motifs for the rug industry. Maurice Dufrène and Paul Follot use elegant and capricious motifs of garlands, lattice-work and flowers and festooned drapes. Together with Süe et Mare, Nathan and Coudyser they were the avowed descendants of classic French art. In a more elaborate manner, Ruhlmann designs carpets in the traditional French spirit.

Paul Poiret, influenced by the strong color of the Russian Ballet and of the Viennese, creates ingenuous floral decorations, which are bold and naïve in color harmony. His ate-

lier Martine today offers a type of rug to be found nowhere else in France. These Martine rugs are some of the most beautiful products of modern decorative art.

A new and barbaric influence came into French art in about 1923 and was adapted with satisfactory results into the rugs of Da Silva Bruhns. The geometric patterns executed in reds and browns and blacks of the African arts and woven of a heavy handtufted wool can be used harmoniously in a modern room. Da Silva Bruhns also makes cubistic cartoons for his rugs. In every instance the design is drawn, and the wool selected, by the artist himself. Myrbor manufactures rugs in exotic shades of greens, pinks, tans and blues with a characteristic mustard green usually predominating. The designs for these rugs are cubistic and ultra modern, and are made by well known modern French artists.

With such influences from the art of the world without and from the genius of the French artists, named in the preceding pages, the modern French rug industry has risen to a level of excellent achievement. The factories of Beauvais and Savonnerie, as well as many smaller firms, are now weaving carpets after the new designs and colors and to meet the demands of a patronizing public.

A story similar to that of the tapestry and rug industry reveals the past century of the silk industry. The age was one of copying old designs. The majority of the homes were decorated in styles of past periods of France, or of other countries, and the furniture itself was antique or reproduction. It was natural and necessary then that the fabrics follow these styles so that they would harmonize with the furniture. There were not sufficient antique fabrics to supply the demand, so it was obligatory to manufacture copies or adaptations of Louis XV brocade and damasks, or Venetian or Genoese velvets, or brocatelles. A modern fabric would have been inharmonious in these old period rooms.

When French furniture began to evolve into a modern product of the 20th century, it became obvious that the old patterns of silk for upholstery and drapery fabrics could no longer be used, but that fabrics in the same spirit as the other modern decorations would have to be manufactured. Fabrics with less delicacy, with stronger, bolder patterns, and with better wearing qualities, were necessary to meet the demands of modern life.

In the realization of the modern style in fabrics, four influences are noticeable. First, the naturalistic design of the

Japanese, and of the fabrics of William Morris of England—the former a careless naturalism of unsymmetrical structure, that of William Morris a formal, balanced arrangement of flowers and birds of conventional form, yet based upon nature. The second influence was the traditional influence of the French style Louis Philippe, with its motifs of drapes, fans and feathers and sculpturesque shadows. The third influence, that of Léon Bakst of the Ballet Russe, brought to the modern French fabrics strength, bold color and geometrical flower forms. The fourth influence, recognizable in modern French textiles and dominant at this time, is that of the cubists. These geometric patterns of angles, squares and circles subordinated all other types of textile design in the 1928 salon.

Foremost among the producers of modern fabrics is Rodier. Textiles manufactured by this firm range from delicate embroidered voiles for glass curtains, to cotton and jute damasks for upholstery and wall coverings. The colorings and designs of Rodier fabrics are strikingly original and the inventions of various new textures by weave variation make Rodier fabrics in constant demand.

Bianchini-Férier with such well known designers as Raoul Dufy and Robert Bonfils, takes a leading place among the

RUG.

Da Silva Bruhns.

manufacturers of printed fabrics. Such new patterns as Fruits d'Europe, Grands Feuillages, and Les Anémones show the marked individualism of the work of these designers.

In the exhibit of Toile Imprimée at the Musée Galliera in June 1928, Lucien Bouix showed printed percales under the titles, *Twist, Paso-Doble, Samba* and *Trebla.* These designs, composed of lines, dots and angles, were striking in combinations of blues, magentas, greens and black. The cubist influence is strong here. Brunet, Meunie et Cie showed interesting bold designs of modern Toile de Jouy.

In the same exhibit were gorgeous printed silk velours by Maurice Dufrène.

The popular designs of Paul Dumas included such colorful titles as *Dans l'Aurore, Au pays chaud, Foret Vierge,* and *Majestueuses.*

Elise Djo-bourgeois exhibited printed cotton fabrics of mechanically laid out geometrical designs in gray with red, green or yellow, the characteristic colors of all of her fabrics.

Ruhlmann and Louis Süe create silks of a characteristic elegance and after the traditional French spirit. The motifs used are vases and jets of water and drapes of fabric.

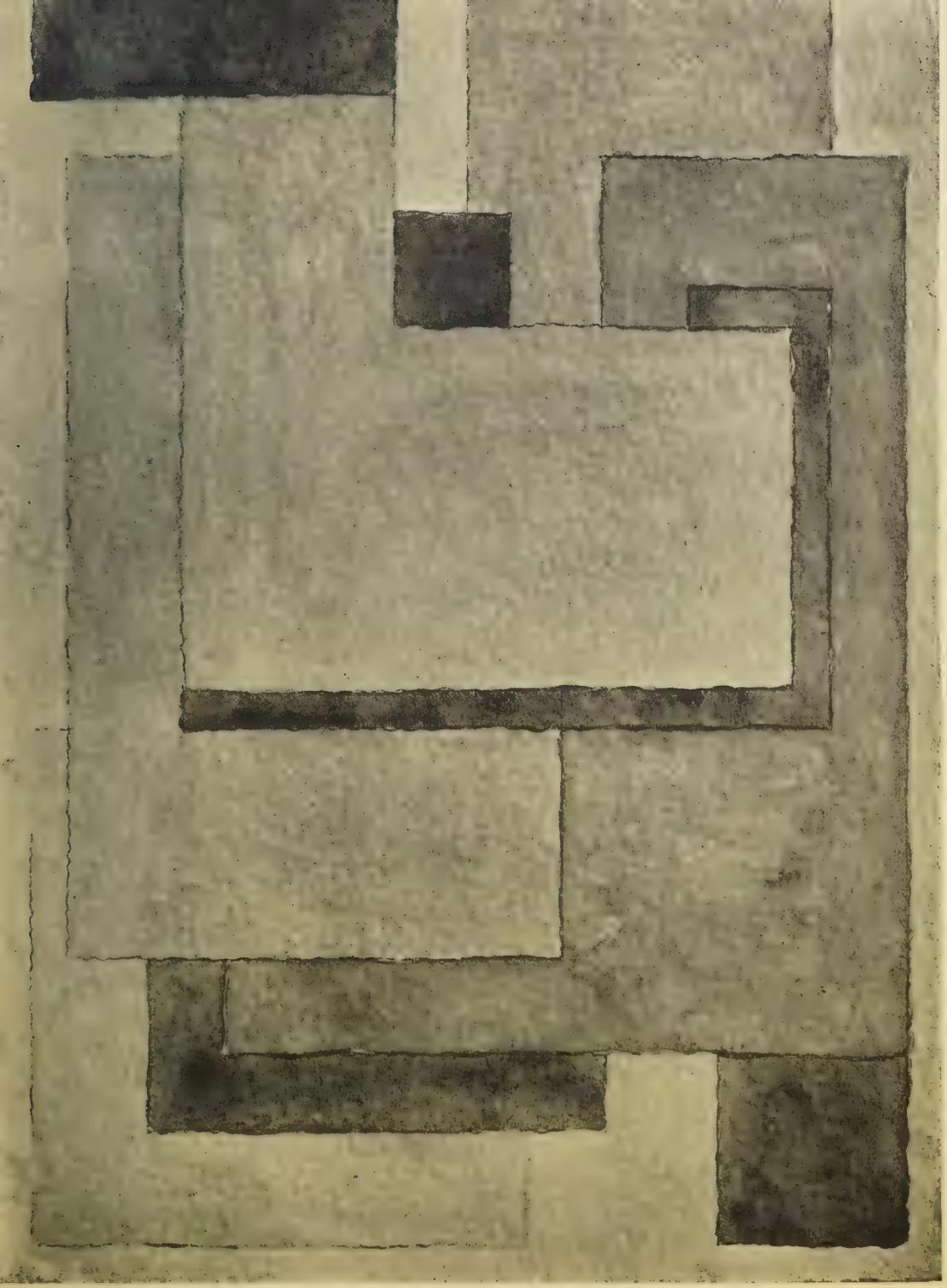
In the printed linens of Martine, as well as in their rugs,

we see a bold and naïve use of large petaled flowers with audacious and unnatural color combinations, virile and psychologically suggestive of the jungle.

Designs of Francis Jourdain are similar to Japanese stencils. Added to these interesting designs are various plaids, stripes and checks in neutral and colored tones which are adaptable and durable for use on walls and for upholstering of furniture.

The remarkable element in modern textiles is their individuality. Each designer has created patterns wholly his own, cartoons not only distinguished by the artist's particular style, but suitable to and characterized by the technique of the loom or stamp and possible for adaptation to every type of client or to every house of sophisticated or rustic character.

The use of textiles in the modern interior complements and firmly establishes the modern note set by the furniture and its architectural background. Materials used are durable, yet soft and luxurious in texture. Linen and jute damasks in modern designs and bright colored cretonnes are both hung in simple folds at the windows, while glass curtains may be of a sheer silk or of voile printed or embroidered in geometrical designs and draped in long supple curves to form extra angles



Design for Hand-tufted Rug.

Da Silva Bruhns.

and cross shadows. Upholstery materials are damasks of silk or cotton, velours, tapestries, or various colored leathers, or even luxurious furs. Allied with the upholstery fabrics for comfort are the deep napped hand tufted rugs and carpets.

CHAPTER VII

LIGHTING FIXTURES

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LIGHTING FIXTURES

It is a far cry from the days when dried rushes dipped in fat furnished an uncertain glimmer in rustic halls, to our present day brilliant artificial lights. The typical form of Greek and Roman lamps is well known, and not so far distant one remembers the whale oil lamps of similar design used in Colonial America. In Gothic and Renaissance days, both oil and candles were used for lighting purposes, and if their gleams did not rival later lighting systems, they fully repaid by the charm their trembling flames lent to old panelled walls and bronze and pewter dishes. Lighting fixtures in the form of lanterns, candlesticks, candelabra, and iron wall brackets held hand-dipped candles. Swinging sanctuary lamps of bronze and silver were also used in private dwellings. The decoration of these lighting fixtures was elaborate. The design motifs were the same as those which decorated the furniture and architecture of the period.

The style of Louis Quatorze in France found lighting at the peak of its splendor. It is always remarkable the way small accessories of decoration can take on the spirit and characteristics of the whole period, and in no instance is this more true than in the case of lighting fixtures. In the crystal lustre chandeliers of the Galerie des Glaces at Versailles one can read the pomp, glory and gorgeous array, which marked all events and all objects in the reign of Louis XIV. Diamond crystals reflect the flames of a myriad candles and their light in turn is trebled by the long panels of mirrors. The finest artists of the period like Marot and Boulle made designs for candlesticks, torchères and chandeliers, and have left us models seldom equalled and rarely surpassed. Figures and foliage, nudes, loves, satyrs, masks, trophies of victory, horns of plenty and amours, which the king loved, were some of the design motifs used together with acanthus scrolling.

Always when a new style was born, its motifs, symbols and even structural characteristics were adapted into new lighting fixtures. Rococo sconces held the candles on Louis XV walls and neo-classic vases, and pendant husks decorated the brackets and candelabra of the 18th century. When in the 19th

Ballroom in Hotel in Southern France. Indirect Lighting in Wall.

Pierre Chareau.

century the evolution of furniture forms was arrested, that of lighting fixtures ceased also. It was only natural that one choosing furniture of other countries and other ages should also choose the lighting fixtures consistent and harmonious with that furniture rather than design new forms. In the meantime, however, electricity had been discovered and improved to the extent that it came within the reach of even the humblest home. The old fixtures were then made to hold electric globes instead of candles or wicks. Electric companies employed men to copy the fine designs of other periods and adapt them to the electric light. In doing this they often destroyed the real charm of the object, and sconces and chandeliers which took months in the making, and were executed by artists' hands, were now turned out, over night, by machinery. However, some advantage was to be gained, and homes that reproduced the old styles could install fixtures, themselves possessing some harmony with the interior, even if the light shed was a little incongruous. Yet, this conglomeration of fixtures of all styles from which to choose led to many discrepancies in the homes of the indiscriminating, and one often sees Louis XVI bowknots decorating lights in a Spanish-California bungalow, or English lanterns in the most

modern of New York apartments. Two great differences stand out between the old order of lighting and the modern French. First, the old style places the attention upon the fixtures, while the modern depends upon light itself for decorative effects. Second, the old order decorates its fixtures with the motifs and fancies of romanticism to detract our attention from the actual function of the fixture, while the modern lighting capitalizes the realism of the fixture and makes it form its own decoration. In other words, the old period fixture placed its emphasis upon ornament rather than structure. And yet, as all the lighting systems of other ages were harmonious with the interiors of those ages, so the modern fixture with its angles and direct simplicity harmonizes with and reflects the Modern French interiors, as no other fixture could do and in so doing, it follows the precedent of all historic lighting systems.

Although there have been few technical changes made in the electric bulb since its appearance years ago, year by year its wide range of effects and adaptability have increased. Never before have illumination systems been so complete and so easily controlled as now. By a push of an unseen button, it is possible to flood a room with light, or to concentrate light

Unusual Nickel Lamp and Wall Lights in Glass-Covered Rectangular Nitches.

J. J. Adnet, Decorator.

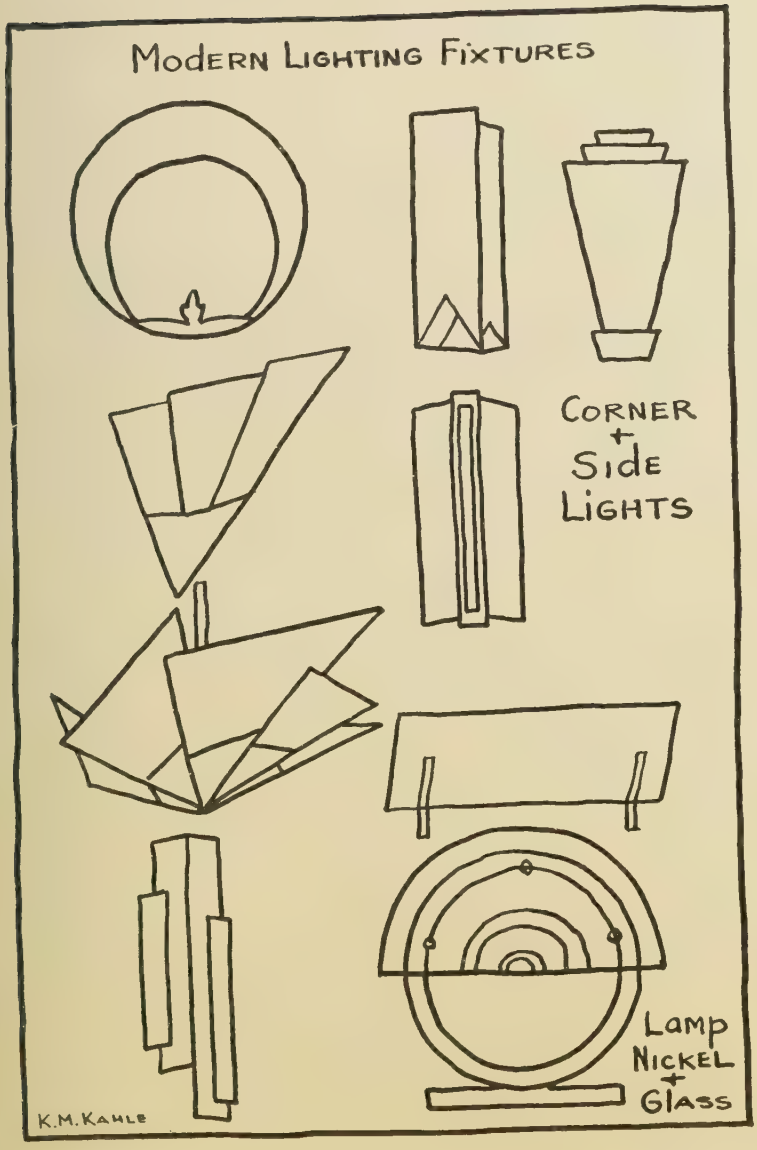
upon a single object and to adjust its range and intensity by the number and strength of the bulbs used.

The age of imitating ancient methods of illumination and of trying to make electric bulbs shine forth from torches and oil lamps is past. A new era in lighting has dawned, which has thrown away the shackles of the old. The present day lighting system recognizes the structural possibilities and limitations of electricity and works with new methods of distribution and control. The object sought is to give light without strain and glare. The first step in the new system was taken when the center hanging lights were removed and side brackets substituted. Usually two systems of lighting are necessary for the ordinary comfort of a room, the direct and concentrated portable lamp to be used for reading and writing, and the general and diffused indirect lighting for the whole room. For the latter the modern system incorporates lights in the walls and ceilings.

Modern lighting employs and capitalizes the logical materials of light production, metal and glass. Instead of trying to hide our glass globes between layers of silk and brocade, glass itself is made to not only diffuse light, but to perform the aesthetic duty of shading the light as well. Science has

proven that these two materials, glass and metal, are the most efficient reflectors and modern artists have succeeded in adding artistic qualities to the bare materials. The designs of the new lighting fixtures are in close harmony with modern decoration as a whole and reflect the same spirit and direct methods of workmanship which pervades the whole of modern art. Simple lines, angles and juxtaposed squares, circles and triangles, form new and hitherto unseen harmonies and designs. The bulk and clean cut angularity of these light forms are readily grasped by the eye. Glass and metal, usually nickel, are the only materials used in modern lighting fixtures. The various types, whether lamp or wall or ceiling fixtures use these materials and follow this general trend of design. The electric bulb is always covered. While in the glass designs of Lalique we often see elaborate geometrical or floral design, usually plain slabs of dull glass or simply etched geometrical designs, are the only decoration. Ordinarily they depend on form and contour for beauty.

For the general lighting of a room fixtures are placed within the walls. Square or rectangular nitches enclosed with frosted glass are placed horizontally or vertically and their placing made to aid in the balance of the room. They are also


Modern Lighting Fixtures
Corner + Side Lights
Lamp Nickel + Glass
K.M. Kahle

placed above doorways and incorporated within wall cabinets, as in the Maison Commune of Maurice Dufrène shown in the 1928 Salon. Pierre Chareau in his ballroom of a hotel in Southern France disperses these wall lights as sunken stars within the wall field. The effect is gay and festive.

Again, wall lights are set out from the wall as square, triangular or rectangular boxes. In one room they take the form of glass beams in the ceiling and are reinforced by simple metal bands. Another room was seen with a border of these glass boxes around the top of the walls. In another room a glass cornice of light is bordered within set panels of glass. Often cylinders of light are set in corners or upon pedestals in a room. Globes hidden in a recess at the joining of walls and ceilings shed a diffused light through the room. A similar contrivance was seen in the smoking room of M. Matet in the 1927 Salon. A metal trench around the top of the walls concealed the lights. Concealed lights within an arched alcove give a pleasing effect. In the exhibit rooms of Waring & Gillow, Paul Follot has given an alcove the form of a shell and tinted it pink and silver. Its greatest beauty is realized when it is flooded with rays of light from unseen bulbs.

Triangular columns of etched glass and metal flank the

bed in a bedroom. Shown by Maurice Dufrène in the 1927 Salon. Wall bracket lights are also extreme in their simplicity. Jourdain and Djo-bourgeois tilt rectangular panels of frosted glass from small nickel brackets and often small rectangles or triangles of glass are hung in pairs flat to the walls or in corners, or may form the panel decoration of a mirror. In contrast, Ruhlmann creates his lighting fixtures from strings of crystals formed, however, after modern patterns. Some suggest fountains and jets of water. Edgar Brandt designs wrought iron brackets which hold half bowls of Lalique glass.

Ceiling lights and chandeliers when present have also undergone a modernizing process. The simplest and one of the most pleasing customs, is to enclose glass panels in the ceiling. However, many decorators hold more closely to traditional chandelier forms and desire hanging lights. Gabriel Englinger makes an angular electric fan shape of glass into a ceiling light. Maurice Jallot joins a series of roof-tile shaped glasses and connects them to the ceiling by means of four metal legs. Sixteen rectangles of glass are joined to form another modern chandelier. Djo-bourgeois extends metal shafts from a rectangle in the ceiling to a metal box containing electric globes, and below this box is a large rectangular sheet of frosted glass.

This is an excellent fixture to use over a dining-room table. Lalique makes glass chandeliers with moulded designs of star-fish and other sea and jungle plants and animal forms. A fine example of Lalique chandeliers was seen in the 1929 Salon in the dining room by Jacques Rapin. Varying sizes of cylinders placed within each other form a familiar type of modern chandelier. A modernistic jumble of rectangular or angular slabs of glass is also formed into a chandelier.

Reading lamps have pottery or metal bases. Delightful modern designs and colorings together with shapes which gradate as a skyscraper, are to be found in the pottery lamp bases. Lamp shades of pleated parchment, or of hide, laced together in hexagonal or octagonal forms are the most popular. Marble bases hold Lalique globes of glass and form a decorative, if not an efficient lamp. Lalique and Edgar Brandt also combine to produce attractive floor lamps. In a recent exhibition one noticed a huge copper snake upholding a cone of Lalique glass. These lamps, more or less naturalistic in their decoration, form a conservative group of modern French lamps.

Modern lighting has a second function added to that of producing light. It is used to enhance the furnishings of a

room. In fact, modern interiors are planned with care for the effect of the lighting system and the rays of light often aid in the actual structural balance and color harmony of a room. Light and shadow produces effects of design and adds subtle tone qualities to a room. Light may also be used to create an atmosphere of peace and quiet by using a somber and diffused system, or it may produce a spirit of gaiety when a strong and sparkling system is installed. Colored lights may have a psychological effect upon the occupants of a room as well as be employed to heighten a color or harmonize a color scheme.

The miraculous power of modern lighting effects is only beginning to be understood, and its possibilities are beyond our present realizations. The theater, however, is continually testing and experimenting and daily giving us results from its laboratory, which decorators may use to increased advantage in modern interiors.

CHAPTER VIII

IRONWORK

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A brief history of the ironwork of the different epochs reveals that the Egyptians were the first to employ wrought iron. They used it in making farmers' tools and implements. Such implements have been unearthed in recent excavations. The Greeks of the 5th Century used iron to mount the tablets of their temples, to preserve them from contact with the air. Iron was used by the Romans for their swords, helmets, and shields, and other weapons of warfare.

In the eleventh century, iron was worked in the forge. The first decoration was executed by flattening the iron and forming it into scrolls. The grille of the cloister of the cathedral at Puy is an early example of this type of work. This method of decoration is easily accomplished, and from the decorative viewpoint has infinite resources. It was employed extensively during the XII and XIII centuries. The progress of ironwork developed rapidly from this time and there appeared successively designs of various forms, flowers, leaves,

and figures. In France, in Spain and in Italy, the XVth and XVIth centuries saw the rapid advancement of ironwork utilized in the various religious monuments. Medallions, foliage, and figures in the round, may be seen in the collection at the Cluny Museum.

Italian and Spanish wrought iron grilles and balconies of Renaissance and pre-Renaissance centuries have long attracted due attention because of their excellence of design and fineness of workmanship. We also find tall candelabra, lanterns, chandeliers and side brackets made of wrought iron, which may be attributed to these countries at this time, but only in Spain do we find the moveable pieces of furniture constructed with an honest intermingling of iron and wood construction. Spanish chests, tables, and vargueños, rely to a great extent upon the beauty of wrought iron structure and decoration for their distinction. However successful this combination of wood and wrought iron may have been in these furniture forms, we do not see wrought iron used again in the construction of furniture until it is introduced in the French furniture of the 20th century.

In the 18th century, France excelled all other countries in the beauty of her ironwork. Simple balconies, doorways

and wrought iron shop signs exist in Museums, which recall the excellence of this French 18th Century ironwork. The grille of the choir of Saint-Ouen at Rouen, and that of Stanislas at Nancy, show evidence of this excellent work.

Again in the present century, France leads other nations in the superiority of her modern ironwork, and the memory of the old simplicity of the artists of the First Empire is found again, deep-rooted in the new ironwork. Indeed, many of the modern designers prepare designs without knowledge of the ironmonger's art, but there are a number of excellent modern iron designers who know the meaning of forged iron and under their hands it becomes the Metal King of our civilization. Ironwork plays an important part in 20th century decoration. Modern architecture demands balconies and railings of wrought iron designed in the modern spirit. Elaborate doorways of wrought iron pattern upon glass have now replaced those of carved wood or bronze. Shop fronts of wrought iron and glass are satisfactory, both from the standpoint of modern advertising and of beauty. In the extensive use of ironwork new beauties and possibilities of design and workmanship of the material have been discovered. In the interiors of houses ironwork combines consistently with

modern architecture in stair railings, doorways, and in coverings for radiators.

Iron and its by products have become integral parts of many pieces of modern furniture. Chairs are made with their structure of iron piping and iron tubes, or flat pieces of hammered iron form the legs on both large and small tables. The above named use of iron is sponsored by the cabinet makers, and in these instances iron always acts as the structure or as an occasional accent of decoration.

The iron workers, however, have a different manner of using their product. Just as Chippendale was first a wood carver, then a designer of furniture, so their first interest is in beautifying the iron and moulding it into designs and patterned surfaces and secondly, in giving it the forms of furniture. For this reason the furniture of the iron workers is usually ornate and best used as an occasional piece in a room with other furniture, rather than forming the complete furnishings of a room. Indeed, in the beginning, such decorative pieces as console tables and mirrors or screens were the only articles made. These pieces remain the most successful of all types that are constructed by the iron workers. Console tables are usually of graceful design, beautiful in their

ornamental detail, and are topped by a slab of colored marble. On the mirrors which accompany these tables is some of the finest and most delicate work of the wrought iron artist. Wrought iron screens, with an all-over abstract or floral design, may be used to advantage in many rooms. These screens sometimes form the ornate doorways between rooms or by their designs add life to an otherwise uninteresting plain surfaced corner.

Large and small tables of wrought iron structure with marble tops are rapidly gaining favor. Round tables are made with tripod legs resting upon a base of marble and large long tables often have an ornate support at each end similar in shape to the supports of Italian Renaissance carved tables. Delightful small smoking tables and tea tables are, however, the more successful pieces.

Fireplace equipment is another branch of household decoration where the worker in wrought iron excels. Andirons, firebacks, and firescreens, allow the fancy of the designer full play, for where the structure must be emphasized in a chair or table, the flat surface of a fire screen is made for ornamentation, which, against the background of a blazing fire, shows to best advantage.

Wrought iron designs against a background of opaque glass or alabaster form the materials for many beautiful lamps and wall and ceiling lighting fixtures. Lalique often combines the art of his pressed glass designs with that of the wrought iron of Edgar Brandt. Cups of glass are held by brackets elaborated into a square of floral designs, or again, these cups are covered with a coat of wrought iron design. Lamps are made with standards of wrought iron design—sometimes in the form of a conventionalized animal or plant. Small lamps, standard lamps, and torchères follow this general design.

Two types of motifs are present in the designs of modern French ironwork. First, the floral and animal designs which, through their extensive use in the Exposition des Arts Décoratifs in 1925, became known to the world as art moderne motifs. The round conventionalized flowers and slender elongated animals give rich surface effects. The last year, however, has brought into favor more simple geometric pattern. These designs of simple lines, curves, and angles, seem more in harmony with the radical trend of the furniture seen in the 1928 and 1929 salons.

INTERIOR DOORWAY IN WROUGHT IRON.

Leaping deer design by Edgar Brandt.

Outstanding among the workers in wrought iron is Edgar Brandt. For many years, Edgar Brandt held the stage alone and ironwork in the 20th century meant Edgar Brandt. Doorways of shops, doorways on the avenues, and small and large interior screens were all labeled with characteristic floral patterns of Edgar Brandt's genius. So great was his success that he now maintains a downtown display room as well as a large factory and wholesale show room. The newest ironwork of Edgar Brandt shows a gradual breaking with his old naturalistic patterns and a strong tendency toward the geometrical type of design. In contrast to roses and their round leaves, we see a new radiator cover with a design of joined crosses overlapped by a pattern of diamond shapes.

The name of Raymond Subes stands next upon the list of modern French iron workers. In his manner of working the iron Subes is a traditionalist. He forges and remains in constant contact with the modest workman, never losing sight of the demands and limitations of his craft. His designs then, even when most elaborate, are made with a knowledge of the construction and with care for the utility as well as the

beauty of the object, be it an interior doorway, radiator cover, or lamp base.

Other excellent iron smiths are Paul Kiss, Edward Schenck, Bergue, Baguès Frères and Gilbert Poillerat.

CHAPTER IX

DECORATIVE ACCESSORIES

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It is from the French that the world learned the art and importance of detail. The French modiste has emphasized the importance of accessories of dress until even you and I, male or female, would not consider a costume complete without handkerchief, tie, gloves and shoes to match. It is here that the opportunity for individuality in dress is given—a bit of blue to match the eyes, a jade pin to repeat and emphasize the color in an embroidered panel—Oh, we are learning in the matter of dress!

But this same knowledge may be transferred and applied to the decorative details of a room. Details of decoration include, first, the small intimate articles which are so necessary for our every day comfort and, second, they may be those articles of artistic beauty and added luxury which it is obligatory for some homes to do without. Whichever type of accessories you are able to have in your home, it is important that you choose them with care and consideration, not only

for their own artistic value and usefulness, but also with relation to the other objects in the room.

In all great periods of decoration, the accessories formed an integral part of the furnishings of the rooms. In the earliest periods, however, there were few accessories except those in constant demand, such as candlesticks and images in bronze or gilded wood. The decoration of these small pieces was nevertheless found to be the key to the motifs of the period, and perfect harmony was maintained between all the objects in a room. As time passed and living conditions improved, both accessories of use and luxury increased in number, until down to the present day, we not only have those of the past to draw from, but also many new creations.

Accessories play an important rôle in establishing the spirit of a period room. The American Colonial and the Spanish house styles now so popular in America, depend upon small details to create their true spirit. Without the detailed use of wrought iron and tile work, the Spanish house would not be Spanish; and without old china, pewter, brasses and early American prints, the Colonial house would lose its old time distinction. And yet, the modern French house using any of these same accessories would seem a hodge-podge. Consis-

Lalique Vases in Dull Metal Tones.

Salon, 1928.

tency, in all the objects of a room, is the keynote of decorative success.

Accessories may not only aid in creating the spirit of a certain style, but they may also function structurally in the building of a decorative scheme. If a certain type of line or form is used in the larger objects of a room, the accessories may echo that same line, and, thus, by line harmony, create a bond of union between all the objects in the room. By this means of line relationship, objects, otherwise foreign to the decorations of a room, may be successfully used. Accessories, by their dark or light tones, may be made to function in the balance of a room. For example, light vases in a dark cabinet may be made to apparently balance as large an object as a piano where dark vases in the same cabinet would leave an unsatisfactory balance. The tone of the upholstery covering of a chair may also alter its apparent size or place of importance in the room. Light furniture against a dark wall attracts attention, while the same furniture against a light wall would be less noticeable.

By means of their color, decorative details may be of great service in the final result of any scheme of decoration. Decorative details, through their color may be made to accent a

certain color scheme, or may be made to distribute the color throughout the room. The following table may prove of service to one using decorative accessories for accents of color:

Bright against a dark wall—

1. Yellow
2. Green
3. Red
4. Blue

Bright against a light wall—

1. Blue
2. Red
3. Green
4. Yellow

Applying the tests we find that the modern accessories as used by the French decorators harmonize with the spirit of the modern decoration, and that they also repeat the lines, forms and colors of the other objects of the room. Conceived and born of the same influence which dominates all modern French art, they are the natural objects to be placed in modern rooms and when we substitute them with objects from another period of decoration, then, and only then, we recognize

the real worth of the former object in relation to its background.

Details of ordinary usage in modern rooms include pottery, sculpture, pictures, glass, screens, flowers and books, as well as cigarette accessories, and a host of other small objects.

The Renaissance of French decorative glass began with Gallé in the late 19th century.

In the realm of glassware Lalique, with his moulded designs in white, grays, dull greens and purples now heads the list of modern French designers of glassware. It has taken many years of hard work and experimentation to reach Lalique's perfect products. While Lalique uses naturalistic flowers and birds in the majority of his designs, in the 1928 Salon his vases were covered with geometrical patterns. Such motifs as the bird, the dandelion, the turtle and the sunflower cover the indented surfaces of Lalique vases. Lalique glasses are also made into clock cases. The names of French glass makers are few in number, but they produce modern glassware of great quality. Such names as Henri Simmon, Marcel Goupy, Georges Dumoulin, Daum, Decorchemont, Marinot, and Genet et Michon, stand out among the yearly exhibitors in the decorative Salons in Paris. The glass of Georges

Dumoulin possesses beauty of form, texture and coloring—all beauties of the glass making process rather than superficial decorations.

Decorchemont is the most prominent maker of *pâte de-verre,* a glass which because of its density and thickness appears more like a ceramic.

Marcel Goupy specializes in enameled glass.

Marinot creates in various techniques. In some of his glass the form is permeated with bubbles, others have patterns in enamel and still others are deeply etched.

The Compagnie des Cristalleries de Baccarat is devoted to the production of table glass,—various types of goblets, and delicate glass animals.

Emile Decœur, Emile Lenoble and Jean Luce and Jean Besnard are notable names in modern ceramics. The designs used by these men are geometrical, drawing their inspiration mainly from primitive sources. Emile Lenoble makes researches into Chinese and Korean art and his designs are suggestive of these sources. Browns, violets and blues—turquoise and azure—are his characteristic colors. Truly, the hand of an artist and a well tempered furnace have combined to give the pottery of Emile Lenoble the essential life quality.

CERAMICS.

Hélène Catelet.

Animals in pottery are made with mentionable results by Jean and Jacques Adnet.

Modernistic human and animal figures are designed and made in the workshops of Galeries Lafayette and Le Printemps. These come in different colored potteries and at reasonable prices.

The forms of metal work have kept pace with the furniture and other accessories of the modern interior and such well known artists as Jean Puiforcat and Christofle are making delightful tea and coffee services, vases, jars, and smoking accessories. In a recent exhibition of jewelry and metal work at the Musée Galliera the work of Hénin, Tétard, Boucheron, Fouquet-Lapar was shown along with the better known Jean Puiforcat. Cardeilhac exhibited a silver and etched glass cocktail service and three silver vases of distinguished design. Woods such as palisander and macassar are used as handles on tea and coffee services and crystal is often combined with silver. In the 1929 Salon des Artistes Décorateurs were seen executed silver pieces from designs by Gaston Dubois, Jean Serrière, Maurice Daurat, and Christian Fjerdingstad for Christofle.

Bronze sculpture finds a place in the modern interior not

only because of its contour and design, but also because of the texture and tone of the bronze itself, which is harmonious with the wood and metal construction of modern furniture. Petersen, sculptor of animals, is one of the most popular workers in bronze.

For a long time we have not been sensitive to the decorative value of books. They have been given a place in a room because of their utilitarian value as reading material, and not because of any decorative qualities they possessed. They can, however, because of their color, add considerable charm to a room, and may also be used to aid in the completion of the color scheme of the room. Modern books have an added value for with their modernistic bindings they blend not only in color but in decorative motifs as well. Modern decorators recognize the value of books in the decorative scheme of a room and are definitely giving their attention to the possibilities of books in decoration. As a result we find a wholly new and modern arrangement of books in book shelves. Instead of standing in monotonous horizontal rows, they are arranged vertically, then horizontally, or vice versa, so that they form an interesting line arrangement, also one that is consistent with modernistic design.

Pictures do not hold an important place in modern decoration, partly because many walls are figured; then, too, frescoes are painted upon the walls. Perhaps the most important reason for the scarceness of pictures in modern interiors is the great trend for simplicity of surfaces. However, when pictures are used, it is most demandatory that the right type be chosen, and we can hardly imagine a Le Brun, or Largillerie or Corot hung on the wall of a Djo-bourgeois interior. The modern note of abstractness and decoration must be present in the pictures as well as in other minor details of the room. Paintings of Jean Dupas, Marie Laurencin, Matisse and those vital canvases of Picasso, Braque, Signac, and André Derain, Othon Friesz, and Franz Marc, as well as many other moderns, are harmonies in 20th century interiors. Pictures should be few, and these few placed with regard to the furniture and should form an integral part of the design of the completed room. For this reason their frames should be simple and in harmony with the tone of wood or metal used in the room, as well as with the picture itself.

The screen has always been an interesting accessory to the discriminatingly furnished room, and many tales of intrigue and romance took place within its folds. In the past, great

artists have not deemed the screen too unimportant an object for their attention. One of the finest of modern French artists, Jean Dunand, specializes in designing lacquer screens. Beautiful lacquer screens and panels are also made by Leon Jallot. The designs of these screens are either modernistic geometrical patterns, or are drawn from oriental or barbaric sources, and their coloring is usually black and gold, or black and one color.

In the modern interior, flowers take a part wholly unprecedented in the history of decoration. One never finds mention of natural flowers in the descriptions of interiors of other periods. The great interest taken in the "Vincennes flowers" of Madame Pompadour leads one to conclude that these foreign artificial flowers took the place of natural ones in the age of Louis XV.

For some years now, modern decorators in America have been fostering the use of ivy and other growing plants and vines for use as a pleasing detail of the well furnished room. The growing plants add a living vitality to a room and the green tones serve as rest spots and thus aid in the distinction of any color scheme.

Modern French decorators add a jar of flowers as a finish-

ing touch to every interior that they create. However, with them, it is not merely a question of adding accidental charm to a room or giving the cheery touch one always feels when flowers are in the room, instead these créateurs choose the flowers for a room because of their particular color or because of their form, or finally on account of the shadows they cast upon plain surfaces. For these purposes certain flowers and plants are more successful than others. Flowers that run the gamut of modern color schemes, such as the anemone and the zinnia, are used to repeat colors in the walls, textiles, or furniture. Form flowers, such as lilies, particularly callas, tulips and poppies, may be used to cast interesting shadows, or repeat the lines of forms of the other objects in the room. Another flower, or more correctly named plant, that had been relegated from the conservatories of the past, is the cactus. Cacti of various varieties and forms are used with unusual success in the modern interior. The simplicity of these forms, their peculiar shades of green, and their stolid strength, make them particularly appropriate in the modern interior. Delightful effects of dark and light may be produced by planning to catch their shadows upon plain walls or wood surfaces.

CHAPTER X

COLOR IN MODERN FRENCH DECORATION

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There is a tendency to associate jazzy colors and strong, harsh contrasts with the modernistic color schemes. This primitive trend of color combination is true of modern Austrian decoration but is not true of modern French. The French draw their greatest inspiration for modern color schemes from the Cubists, and together with forms initiated by Picasso and translated into concrete form by the architect-decorator we find the use of restrained color, closely related tones, and a contrast of value and intensity rather than hue. The French refer to these colors as "sad colors".

In these "sad" color schemes there is usually a quantity of brown of different values or different values of gray shading from silver gray to black. The use of these neutral colors is decidedly modern. A room in the neutral tones of beige, brown, and cream, oyster-white, gray and dull greens suggests a typical modern French color scheme. The subtle contrast of values forms the chief interest in such a color com-

bination—gray against white, beige against brown and dark green against tones of light green. These combinations may lack the snap of stronger contrasts of complementary colors, but we do not tire of them so soon.

Kohlmann uses a combination of neutral tans and browns accented by burnt orange or relieved by pink and silver grays. However as he progresses his love for strong virile color seems to overcome his desire to follow the popular "sad colors" and one notes the added brilliance in his later interiors. Among these one sees such combinations as pinkish-tan walls, brown woodwork and carpet, with rug and upholstery of burnt-orange and dull red-violet. The furniture is a combination of gold laquer and walnut. There is a yellow vase in the room. Another room combines a bright blue wall with green drapes and upholstery, and tan and brown woodwork and rugs while still another scheme uses tans and browns with yellow-green, green-blue and silver. A warm color scheme by Kohlmann combines a dull and bright intensity of both cardinal red and red-violet with browns and tans, and, for accent, yellow and green books in a wall case.

A harmony of tan and salmon pink is characteristic of the interiors of Matet. One cannot refrain from calling to

Studio. The Walls are Painted Lemon-yellow. The Stairway Metal Chromium. The Table is of Palisander and Nickel. Benches Upholstered in Beige Velour with Palisander Bases. Linoleum Yellow. Curtains Yellow and Citron.

D. I. M., Decorators.

mind the color-prints of Utamaro and wondering how much direct inspiration for the modern trend of coloring may have come from them—salmon-pink and tans, silver, grays, and blacks in combination.

A chambre-studio by Louis Sognot has salmon-pink walls, a light brown carpet, furniture of palisander and a silver-gray door and gray upholstered divan. Two chairs are covered in light cream and a picture gives an accent of turquoise. A bedroom by Noémi Skolnik has salmon-pink walls, palisander woodwork and furniture, gray floor, and gray upholstery on bed and chairs. Yellow curtains, a yellow and salmon-pink rug and lavender tops to the book cases and window shelves complete the scheme.

Another room by Noémi Skolnik, a chamber for a young girl, combines tans, a light and dark value of pink, and a light gray-green. The end of the room has brilliant botanical paintings of flowers in red, yellow, and lavender.

R. Mallet-Stevens harmonizes yellow, tan, and gray, with accents of dull red and a bit of bright blue in books and vase.

The color of René Prou is always bright and refreshing. His Salon in a Palace in the 1928 Salon had a combination of blue-gray walls with green palm trees painted upon them and

rose velour on light and dark brown furniture. In the 1929 Salon he showed a Salle Commune with light tan walls and brown furniture combined with dull brick red. In the windows are deep pink flowers in alternating blue and yellow pots and one chair is upholstered in a cretonne repeating these colors, another chair in blue, and still others in striped material repeating the same colors.

Leleu exhibited a dining-room in the 1929 Salon des Artistes Décorateurs which was Egyptian in its coloring of yellow-tan, red-brown and blue-green. The furniture was caucasian walnut and the chairs were covered in tapestry made from a design by Jean Beaumont.

The interiors of Djo-bourgeois are decorated with fresh, cool greens and yellows usually relieved by neutral grays, but the pure bright color dominates the neutral and the result is gay rather than somber. One room by Djo-bourgeois has a chintz print of geometrical design in green and grays—one of the designs by Elise Djo-bourgeois which are used in all of the interiors by Djo-bourgeois—and the colors are repeated in the metal legs and green marble top of a large table. The furniture is built on simple straight lines and its constructive necessities are its only ornamentation.

Pierre Chareau also uses very restrained color schemes in which one color is set off by the neutral tones of large wall spaces, rugs, and beautifully polished surfaces of simple woods.

Ruhlmann and Paul Follot are traditional in their use of color, and while they use a quantity of neutral gray and beige, it is always combined with soft and almost delicate blue, pink or green. They seldom use dark browns and even in furniture construction seem to favor the lighter woods with the darker wood used in lines of inlay.

Maurice Dufrène is the real colorist of the modern French school. He is not limited by one or two set schemes of coloring but can use the gamut of color combinations and play a new and unusual harmony with each scheme. One finds the frequent use of related schemes and one also notes the employment of black to set off and give added contrast to the other colors.

The walls of the private office of M. Dufrène are hung with water-colors of rooms designed by him and executed by Galeries Lafayette, and, waiting for my appointment with M. Dufrène, I had ample time to study them. I noticed a kitchen design in which the tile floor was deep blue, the walls red and

the table yellow. A dining-room had a black and white tile floor, white walls and furniture, green chair seats and curtains and a gray marble fireplace. Another dining-room labelled "Neptune" was done in green, purple, blue, and a bit of dull pink.

Brilliant color and strong startling contrasts are used by the Martine School, but this school cannot be said to be part of the modern French trend of decoration. It is closer akin to the revival of brilliant peasant design and coloring, and its main beauty results from color rather than from the forms of its furniture or its dynamic architecture.

The materials of modern French decoration have to a great degree influenced the color schemes. Metal pipes, wrought iron and glass, all find dominant places in the construction of the modern interior and thus before the fabrics of decoration are introduced into a room there is already a quantity of neutral metallic tones. A polished aluminum staircase may give a dominant neutral tone to one room, while a wrought iron door grille would suggest the introduction of dull black in another room. The use of marble tops for tables and cabinets usually brings in neutral browns or grays although marble may be obtained in almost any color. Leath-

California Apartment of Templeton Crocker. Living-Room.

Jean Frank, Decorator.

ers, cowhide and pigskin, and even exotic animal skins are used for upholstery, and while sometimes dyed, are favored most when retaining their natural colors. Chamois gives soft creams and yellow; and snake skins give tones of brown and tans. Porcelain also plays an important part in the modern interior and closely modulated tones of white often form the main note of a color scheme. White porcelain walls, white leather, white fur rugs, cream-white porcelain pottery upon glass shelves all offer subtle contrasts of tone and texture possible of conception and perhaps of appreciation by only the artist's eye. Another symphony in one color was seen in a room which had walls hung with walnut colored straw marquetry as a background for rolls of antique Chinese silk painted in browns. Dunand has decorated a dining-room in neutral brown tones. It is in the California apartment of Templeton Crocker. Rays of different toned gold laque arraché radiate on the walls. The ceiling in three levels is in a soft gold and the light from concealed sources is reflected from the various planes. The dining table and the service tables are of red-brown lacquer with crushed inlaid eggshell tops. The chairs are of the same lacquer, upholstered with brown grained leather.

The living room of this same apartment again shows the use of restrained coloring. Ivory and brown are the prevailing tints. The walls and ceiling are of parchment applied in squares, and the same material forms screens which cover the radiators and the outline of the piano. The low square built sofa and chairs are upholstered in deep ivory Morocco leather and the numerous small tables are covered with brown and white sharkskin, dark brown pressed straw, or parchment. The fireplace mantel is framed in gilt bronze and a large table is of the same bronze. Cabinets of dark brown straw appliqué hold the radio and phonograph. The curtains are of hand woven oyster-white silk. Many of the lamps in the room are of rock crystal with shades of mica. Ivory and metal are combined in other lamps. This room is by Jean Frank of Paris.

Another room which reminds one of the coloring of cubist painting is the breakfast room. The walls are of black lacquer with designs of tropical colored fish and silver rays of light. The ceiling is a canopy of glass, gray and white set in a silver frame above which are the lights. A pink and silver lacquered table has accompanying chairs of pink and silver metal tubes.

The carpet is black and the curtains are of heavy salmon-pink silk.

Another tendency in Modern French color schemes is to prefer cool colors. There are two main cool colors—blue and green. These hues are closely related and the range of harmonies is rather simple. Most shades of green harmonize with each other and most shades of blue also harmonize. As cool colors suggest distance a room decorated in these colors has a feeling of spaciousness. Maurice Dufrène often uses a combination of blue and green. In the 1928 Salon a bedroom by Rapin had a blue and green scheme made dominant by wave effects frescoed on the walls. A quantity of fabrics, especially cretonnes, are designed which are a combination of blue and green tones, and one sees harmonies of various intensities of green with no other color but a bit of black. And again one recalls the influence of the Japanese—the colour prints of Hiroshige in this instance.

CHAPTER XI

PRACTICAL USE OF MODERN FURNITURE IN THE AMERICAN HOUSE

CHAPTER XI

PRACTICAL USE OF MODERN FURNITURE IN THE AMERICAN HOUSE

The time has come when the public no longer giggles and snickers at a display of Modern Decorative Art, but rather seeks out such exhibitions, and views them with an intelligent interest and a desire to understand. Indeed, many people are inquiring into the possibilities of introducing modern furniture into their homes. Yet, to advise them to do so without considering all angles of the problem would only lead to unsatisfactory results.

There are few examples of modern American decoration to choose from. Yet, to import or reproduce rooms after the famous French decorators would hardly be a logical solution. Indeed, we would be in harmony with the spirit of the age, but, on the other hand, we would not be interpreting our national æsthetic sense. Our problem should be one of creation or adaptation, not of imitation.

In order to bring the influence of Modern French Decora-

tion within the scope of practicality for the average American house, it is necessary to check over the elements in the French Decorative Arts that are analogous with those in Modern American life.

In the chapter on "Actual Tendencies", I have mentioned the close connection between art and the discoveries of science and the raw products of industry. These factors which determine the materials used in modern decoration are more adaptable to American conditions than to those of any other country. American industrial manufacturing leads the world and such products as glass, steel, iron and other metals would be more accessible to American decorators than to those of any other country. There also seems to be a closer connection between the modern use of these products and American municipal life than in Europe where the antiquities of ages are in evidence everywhere.

The compactness of certain pieces of modern French furniture makes them adaptable for use in the average small house or apartment. Combination pieces and built-in shelves and sofas also allow for more space where incorporated in the plans of small rooms. The built-in features, however, if adapted in America, will require extra knowledge on the part

of our architects who are not usually trained as decorators and, unfortunately, do not possess the knowledge of furniture arrangement even desirable for an architect. Certain architects do, however, retain interior decorators within their offices with whom they consult and coöperate for the completely furnished house. In my opinion, however, the desirable solution is for the knowledge of both architect and decorator to be incorporated after the French system, within one man. The architect has already done his part in creating extra space by means of built-in features. It is now left to the decorator to suggest space where there is none by means of his furniture structure. Then, too, in a small apartment it is well that few pieces of bric-a-brac be used, as extra articles only crowd and make the space seem smaller. The simplicity of the modern decoration and the plainness of the lines and forms of small accessories as well as large pieces of furniture make them adaptable to rooms with limited space.

I believe that modern furniture will suffer less in the change from cabinet maker to factory product than that of any other period furniture. The flatness of the wood surfaces and the lack of carved ornament make modern furniture adaptable to machine production. The construction of

modern furniture is frank and strong and of such simple lines that machine production may in many cases improve upon the strength of the craftsman's work. The prices of factory made modern furniture should, for the above named reasons be comparatively low, except where precious woods or ivory are used. Such elaborate pieces would necessarily fall under the category of custom made furniture and their prices be regulated accordingly.

By the proper artistic direction, the machine precision of furniture products can be seasoned with individuality, and art may be united with industry.

Many persons living in the new standardized industrial world of speed, cling, when they come to furnish their homes, to every suggestion of old-world craft and aged mellowness. They love the relaxation that comes from the fanciful and historical objects with which they surround themselves and take pleasure in everything which removes them from their work-a-day world.

To the above named persons, dynamic modernism is a shock. Yet, this shock of modern art may perform a useful purpose in jarring us out of copying old world periodism, and when the pendulum swings back, we may find some interest-

ing products will remain. It is hoped that a compromise between period and modern will be reached by the creative artist.

In the meantime, the modern style with all its rationalism and dynamics is invading the club, café, beauty salon, and small shop. Such establishments are more compatible with the brutal strength and action of modern art than the average conservative home.

However, modernism is gradually creeping into the home in the form of dress, of reconstructed manners, customs and ideals, and into the hearts of the younger generation. These same young people and their elders who are young in spirit, are beginning to feel a kinship with the modern decorative arts, and it is they who are sponsoring the modern art movement and turning out their copies of antiques to make place for an original creation of a living artist-workman. This is evidenced by the fact that the modern creative artist is not starving in the garret, but instead, maintains a flourishing shop on the Avenue.

Yet, such is the design and simple construction of the occasional small modern table and bric-a-brac stand that an amateur craftsman might have considerable joy and success in constructing them at home. Truly, it is upon the simpli-

city of the bright lacquered furniture or plain grained wood surfaces, and the gay, clear color that the adaptableness of modern decoration to the average American house depends. Rooms thus decorated have a freshness and a crispness which is the result of beauty utilified by common sense. Color atones for lack of light. But to suggest the free use of color to the average untrained eye is a dangerous policy. Color must be understood to be used with success.

Let us picture some of the American rooms, using originals or adaptations of modern French furniture, that American decorators are creating for the modern client.

An American living room: This is done chiefly in beige with the walls covered with woodpaper in squares. One chair is of walnut with velvet upholstery, and the other of walnut with Rodier fabric. The book case is of satinwood and walnut. The day-bed is of birch. Another chair is of beige, suede and beige rayon velvet. The grooved cabinet is of lemon wood. The round table of satinwood and birch. The large cabinet of zebra and satinwood with a walnut base. The commode is of sycamore, black lacquer and pewter inlay. Lighting fixtures of frosted glass set in wall at convenient

height. Accessories, modern picture, jar on bookcase, lamp with parchment shade and pottery base.

Bedroom: In White, gray and silver; bed of gray hairwood, with pewter inlay. Curtains of white satin and gauze. Small table of gray hairwood, black lacquer and maple burl. Bedspread, white fur velvet; chest of drawers, mahogany with marble top. Stepped table at either side of bed with lamp.

Living Room: Fireplace and mantel of mirror; curtains, 3 shades of chartreuse chiffon; overdrapes, Rodier figured material; chairs in Rodier fabrics; lights of opaque glass. Fan table by Chareau.

Dining Room: (Lord & Taylor Studios) Citron yellow, tangerine and silver lacquer mirrors on opposite walls; dining table of silver leaf lacquer with mirror top; sideboard of silver and black lacquer. Wall of citron yellow, curtains silver gauze and chartreuse. Serving tables African zebrawood with silver lacquered legs and tops of walnut. White pottery (table and sideboard grooved), cupboard nitch with colored glass. Chairs in tangerine; lights in long triangles.

The more expensive woods in the above rooms might be substituted by such commonly known woods as beech, ash, maple and redwood, thus cutting the cost of the furniture.

Also the costly metals may be replaced by iron or aluminum or even by lines of paint, and still not destroy the effect. Modern textiles are being manufactured of good design, but inexpensive materials.

To learn the appreciation of simple design and the theory of color harmony,—these two things are necessary in creating the modern interior, for they, although not new ideas in themselves, are the basic principles of 20th century decoration. Insistence upon simple design has brought a rationalization of form, a purity of line, and an absence of excessive ornament hitherto possessed only by the purest Greek art. The emphasis upon the intrinsic quality of materials themselves has tempered art with practicality and thus brought it to the notice of industrial captains who would otherwise not have recognized its value. And thus modern art has associated itself with the necessities of modern life.

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